■ 2bU! / E1
Showdown of the shopaholics: Which of 5 teams will represent RP in HK?

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Officials advise GMA to go ahead with US trip

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LTFRB OKs ₱1 fare hike for air-con buses

■ Business / B1
Equitable PCI Bank shareholders elect 2 boards of directors

■ Motoring / C1
Father, son bonding on right track at Asian Formula 3

Gonzalez sitting on $2-M bribery complaint vs Perez

By Fe Zamora and Armand N. Nocum

JUSTICE Secretary Raul Gonzalez is not acting on a $2-million bribery complaint filed against former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez by former Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez, a senior prosecutor at the Office of the Ombudsman said yesterday.

GONZALEZ/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
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Wednesday, July 20, 2005 ★★ 54 pages / 5 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 224 P18
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Pagcor linked to drive to kill impeach complaint

By Michael Lim Ubac

IS MALACAÑANG out to kill the impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo?

A ranking leader of the House of Representatives yesterday disclosed that the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

PAGCOR / A7

GMA to form truth body

Admits she can't ignore quit calls

By Christine O. Avendaño and Christian V. Esguerra

SAYING for the first time that she could not simply ignore calls for her to resign, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday bowed to demands for the creation of a truth commission that would probe into claims that she was involved in election fraud.

But Ms Arroyo also stood her ground, declaring in a letter to the country's Roman Catholic bishops that her decision to stay in office was the right one.

She did not say who would comprise the commission but Malacañang indicated some of its members would be known before the President's State of the Nation Address before Congress on July 25.

Ms Arroyo spelled out her position in a letter dated July 18 to Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla, outgoing president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

A CBCP official initially welcomed Ms Arroyo's declaration but one bishop asked if the commission would have the power to question Ms Arroyo herself.

"What will be the scope of its authority? What will it be allowed to do?" Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz asked in a phone interview with the INQUIRER. "Will it have the power to subpoena people, including the President? Can it secure bank documents?"

The CBCP last week suggested that the formation of a truth commission could be one way out of the political crisis battering the country. It also asked Ms Arroyo not to "simply dismiss" calls for her to step down.

Similar proposals for the creation of a truth panel were aired earlier by the University of Sto. Tomas and by the Bishops-Businessmen's Conference.

"In all humility, I took to heart the admonition that I should not

GMA/ A8

EDWIN BACASMAS

HER "NATURAL SELF" is best for President Arroyo, good advice from Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo during the Manila Overseas Press Club forum on Monday night. On Tuesday, Romulo hosts Ms Arroyo at the 107th founding anniversary of the DFA.

8 out of 10 Filipinos want GMA out, says Pulse Asia poll

WHETHER by resignation or impeachment or unconstitutional means, nearly 8 out of 10 Filipinos want President Macapagal-Arroyo banished from Malacañang even before she completes her six-year term.

This was the result of a nationwide survey conducted by Pulse Asia Inc. from June 20 to 23, disputing Malacañang's claim that the views of respondents in Metro Manila differ sharply from those of the rest of the country.

Some 1,200 respondents took part in the nationwide survey.

"The survey findings indicate that Metro Manilans generally reflect the sentiments of the rest of the country insofar as the continuation of the Arroyo administration until 2010 is concerned, but not in the choice of the country's leaders," Pulse Asia executive director Ana Maria L. Tabunda said in a statement.

A survey conducted by Pulse Asia on July 2-8 (300 respondents) found that 72 percent of residents in Metro Manila distrusted Ms Arroyo and that 58 percent wanted her to resign.

"Probes into Metro Manilans' views regarding the best and worst political scenarios for the country reveal very little support for the incumbent administration," Tabunda said.

The Pulse Asia Inc. survey conducted nationwide showed that Filipinos considered the President's stay in office (22 percent) the "most destructive political scenario," similar to a coup d'etat (22 percent) in which a group of military and police officials choose the group that will govern.

Twenty percent considered a coup and a military junta a "destructive political scenario."

Only 17 percent said an impeachment of Ms Arroyo and her replacement by Noli de Castro was destructive.

8 OUT OF 10/ A4

Wonder kid a Grade 1 dropout

By Madonna T. Virola
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

VICTORIA, Oriental Mindoro—When he was a year old, he could sing do re mi.

At 2, he could already read and name almost 60 countries. At 3, he started writing and reciting the capitals of nearly 200 countries.

Now 4, Adrian Maronilla Jr. loves to open books—even those without pictures.

He asks adults to sit down with him for a conversation. His thoughts are focused (not even dangling a treat from Jollibee can disturb him), probing and creative.

He started speaking straight English at the age of 2. His godfather Christian Dechosa suggested to his parents that they talk to him in English. They used to converse in Tagalog.

His vocabulary is unusual; he refers to Batman's enemy as an "opponent." He calls his paint strokes "pathways."

"He's even better than my college students," said Marilyn Manigbas, his parents' godmother and city education officer who accompanied the INQUIRER to meet the boy wonder.

"When he was 5 months old, I said his name was Adrian. He said 'Adi' so that's what

WONDER KID/ A8

PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

ADRIAN MARONILLA Jr., 4: Asked to draw a flag, he drew a school campus with buildings, trees, students in line, and of course, the flag.

Illegal, say legal eagles; diversionary, say critics

By Norman Bordadora and Philip C. Tubeza

AN AFFRONT to the Constitution and a political ploy were how legal stalwarts and opposition leaders called President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision to set up a commission that would investigate allegations that she cheated in the 2004 election.

"If there'd be any investigation into electoral fraud, the proper venue for that would still be the Presidential Electoral Tribunal and the impeachment court," Fr. Joaquin Bernas, one of the framers of the 1987 Constitution, told the INQUIRER.

"Any parallel investigation would be an attempt to subvert the Constitution.".

Bernas, one of the legal experts whom the House of Representatives consulted about the admissibility of the "Hello, Garci" tapes as evidence in its investigation of electoral fraud, added: "There is a Constitution and there are institutions [tasked to undertake certain functions]."

The Jesuit priest, who was a member of the 1986 Constitutional Commission, begged off from further comment, saying he first wanted to see the President's executive order creating such a commission before coming up with a detailed opinion.

"I don't know what truth is it about [that they'd be looking into]," Bernas said.

Former Sen. Rene Saguisag, chair of a fact-finding commission which looked into alleged corruption in the Philippine centennial preparations in 1998, also said that a truth commission designed to look into the conduct of elections would be a breach of the law.

"It's unconstitutional because [the investigation of election results] belongs to the Presidential Electoral Tribunal," Saguisag said.

ILLEGAL/ A8

Atienza and Binay: Best of pals, best of foes

By Tarra V. Quismundo and Tina G. Santos

BEST FRIENDS.

They've known each other for decades, fought the same causes and marched together since martial law.

But now, the two are walking on different roads.

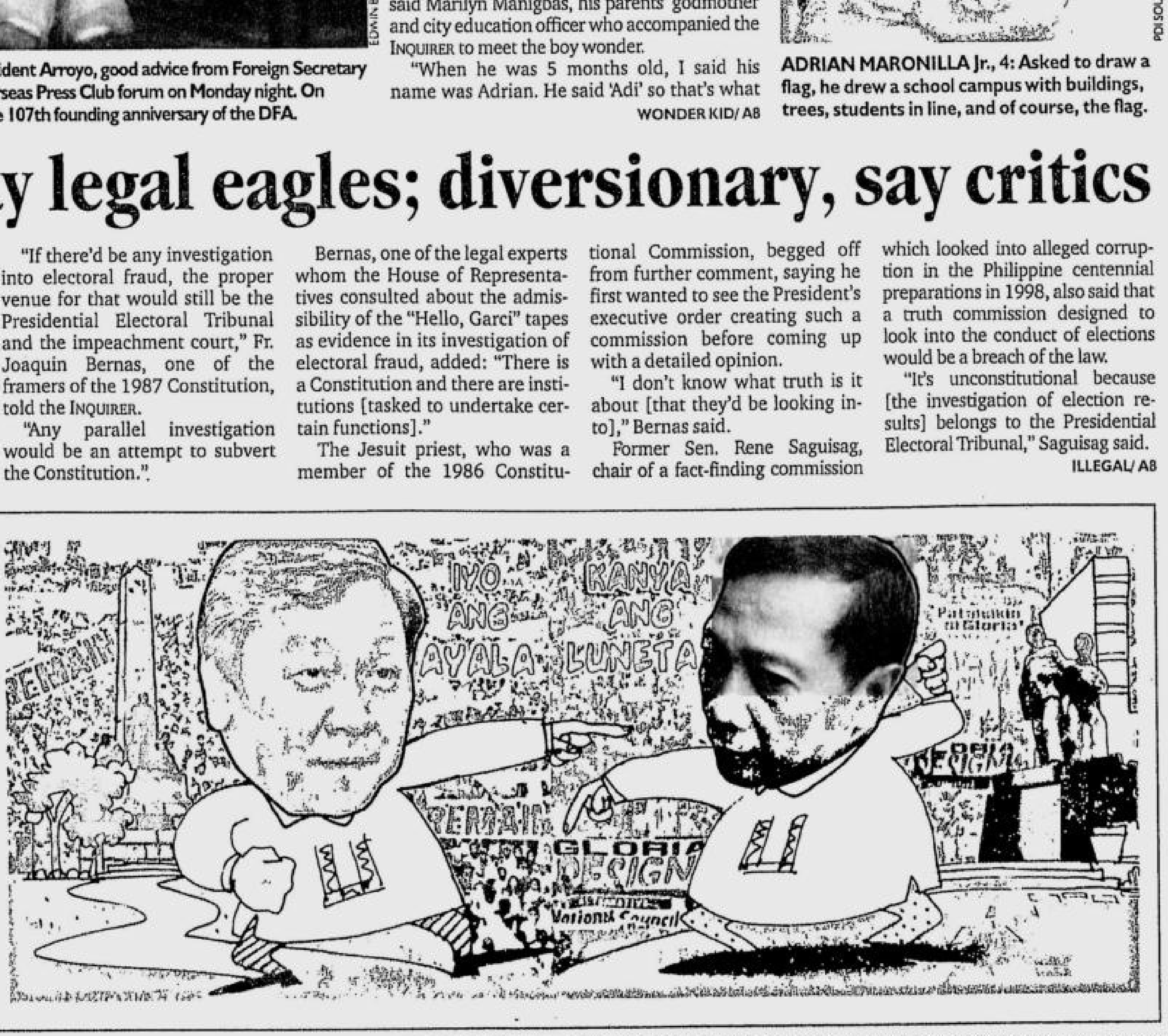
While Manila Mayor Lito Atienza has been rallying his constituents and other local officials to support the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo, Makati Mayor and United Opposition (UNO) chair Jejomar Binay has been leading calls for Ms Arroyo to resign.

Atienza and Binay maintain that their politics has not affected their friendship.

"We may differ in principles but only in this issue alone. There may be personalities and other personal biases involved, but we've remained friends because we respect each other," Atienza told the INQUIRER.

Binay confirmed this, saying: "It was a parting of ways [be

ATIENZA/ A4



WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern Luzon will experience rains and gusty winds, with moderate to rough seas. Western Luzon and Palawan will have mostly cloudy skies with occasional rains. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

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Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

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Gonzalez stays after flap on Kris

EVEN if his boss had to go out of her way to apologize for his offensive remarks, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez is not about to lose his job.

"The President has not said anything about letting go of Secretary Gonzalez," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said in Filipino.

Gonzalez has been staunch in defending the President against those calling for her resignation, to the extent of attacking former President Corazon Aquino and her family.

On Sunday night, the President called up Aquino's daughter, actress and television star Kris, and apologized for Gonzalez's remarks that Aquino should attend to her daughter's affairs and leave the management of the affairs of the nation to the government.

Gonzalez has since apologized to Aquino and Kris for his statements.

As to why the President had to personally apologize to Kris, Ermita said the President "feels responsible for the actions of the people serving under her."

He said Kris was well respected and had been "very helpful" to the President.

The actress campaigned for Ms Arroyo in the 2004 presidential elections.

Ermita said he has repeatedly reminded members of the Cabinet not to be intemperate in their statements so as not to add to the political tension.

'Too harsh'

"Let's not be too harsh in our statements as we all want to have a stable political atmosphere," he said.

Meanwhile, two Cabinet members yesterday denied reports that they had broken away from the President.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said she would never desert Ms Arroyo unless the President herself decides to accept her courtesy resignation.

"Why leave her (the President) at this point when she badly needs the support of her Cabinet members?" Sto. Tomas said.

But while her courtesy resignation "still hangs in balance," she said she has already started to pack up her things in case Ms Arroyo decides to appoint a new Labor secretary.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla also sought to dispel rumors that he had left the Cabinet, describing these as "highly exaggerated" and "hyperbolic statements for which I have little inclination."

Sto. Tomas and Lotilla clarified that they had both submitted courtesy resignations early this month to comply with the President's directive and would continue to serve in their posts until Ms Arroyo acts on their resignations.

"I serve at the pleasure of the President as Energy secretary. She enjoys my support as the duly constituted President of the Republic," Lotilla said in a statement.

Lotilla said in case he is replaced, he had a transition plan mapped out that would ensure "security of energy installations and fuel supply to avoid any disruptions in the delivery of vital services to the public."

Sources in the department have said that Lotilla's resignation was "irrevocable."

But the President has already decided to retain Lotilla as Energy secretary.

Sto. Tomas said that until she is replaced, she would continue to perform her duties as Labor secretary.

"I won't allow politics to hinder us from delivering DOLE services to our people, especially our workers," she said.

Sto. Tomas disclosed that one of the Hyatt 10, the group of Cabinet secretaries who demanded that the President step down, was planning to desert the group not to regain his old job but to personally reconcile with the President.

Sto. Tomas earlier admitted she was originally part of the Hyatt 10. But she said she backed out because she did not believe that the reforms the group was advocating could be achieved by drastic means.

She said she did not want to embarrass the President by publicly calling for her resignation. *Christine Avendaño, Jerome Aning and Abigail L. Ho*

Solons chide new 'defectors'

By Philip C. Tubeza and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

HOUSE leaders yesterday chided resigned Palace advisers Victoria Garchitorena and Corazon Guidote for allegedly resorting to "publicity stunts" to highlight their departure from the Cabinet.

The reasons for resigning given by Garchitorena and Guidote were "mere hypocrisy disguised as concern for the country," said Majority Leader Prospero Nograles and Deputy Speaker for Mindanao Gerry Salapuddin.

Nograles said the press reports about Garchitorena and Guidote were not accurate as President Macapagal-Arroyo had asked all Cabinet officials to resign two weeks ago on July 7 to make way for a revamp and many were not asked to stay and were not re-appointed.

Nograles said Guidote and Garchitorena should have emulated Silvestre Afable, the Malacañang communications director, who chose to resign in a private and cordial manner, "which speaks [well] of his character."

"Why make public their resignation, to embarrass the President?" he said.

Last Monday, Garchitorena, presidential consultant on good governance and poverty alleviation, and Guidote, presidential consultant on investor relations, made public their "irrevocable" resignation from the government.

Garchitorena said she was bothered by the so-called Gloriagate tapes while Guidote said she was concerned that the economy was not getting the full attention of the leadership because of the political crisis.

"If Guidote is really concerned about the economy, then patriotism and public service dictate that she stay and do her best to help make the economy stable. On the part of Garchitorena, if she is really bothered by the tapes, why resign only now?" Nograles said.

Nobody wants Drilon's job – Joker

SENATE President Franklin Drilon could very well retain the top Senate post as nobody wants his job right now because of the precarious political situation, said maverick administration Sen. Joker Arroyo.

While it used to be a much-coveted job, the Senate presidency does not hold much allure now because it doesn't command a solid following, the senator said.

"The Senate President unfortunately has become a hostage in the 23-member Senate, the consequence of the current political crisis. Before, there were 14 majority senators and 9 minority senators and the lines were clearly drawn," Arroyo said in a statement.

Administration senators had predicted that Drilon would lose the Senate presidency after he led the four-member Liberal Party contingent in the Senate in a breakaway from the administration.

With the realignment of forces in the chamber, the administration lost its commanding majority of 14 against the opposition's nine.

The administration has now been reduced to 10 senators, but so has the minority been reduced to seven, said Arroyo.

There are now four blocs in the chamber—10 majority senators, four Liberals (Drilon, Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan and Senators Rodolfo Biazon and Manuel Roxas), seven opposition senators and independent opposition senators Juan Ponce Enrile and Edgardo Angara, according to Arroyo.

Villar, who has a term-sharing arrangement for the Senate presidency with Drilon, curtly told reporters yesterday that the Senate presidency "still belongs to Frank."

Drilon said he would abide by the agreement and would support Villar's bid for Senate presidency in July 2006.

But Sen. Panfilo Lacson yesterday said that the Senate minority was a solid bloc of eight and had agreed to vote as a bloc should there be a move to elect a new Senate President.

"We'll vote as a solid bloc whichever way we go," said Lacson, after the eight senators met at a caucus at the Hyatt hotel.

Lacson said the opposition in the Senate no longer considered Angara as a minority member.

Enrile, who recently renounced his membership in the minority and declared he no longer recognized the authority of Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., surprisingly turned up at the caucus.

The eight are Lacson, Enrile, Pimentel, Serge Osmeña, Alfredo Lim, Jamby Madrigal, Loi Ejercito and her son, Jinggoy.

Pimentel said the Senate leadership was discussed in the caucus but said he was too engrossed with bringing about President Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation to worry about the Senate presidency.

"That's not my priority. My priority is the resignation of Gloria; everything else is secondary to me," he said.

Lacson said he was not aware of moves to unseat Drilon, or of other interested parties trying to court the minority.

He said the minority was also not recruiting others to get the 13 senators needed to install a new Senate President. *TJ Burgonio and Juliet Labog-Javellana*

GMA's US trip is a go

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo may be rarely out of Malacañang these days, but her officials said she will be pushing through with her trip to the United States in September. Unless something happens that would prevent her from doing so.

"I believe it's a go unless there are other events that would take place which would prevent her from departing," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye told reporters yesterday when asked about her US trip set two months from now.

Earlier yesterday, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo told reporters that he has recommended that the President make the trip because this was "important" for the Philippines.

Romulo reminded reporters that the President was set to attend a summit of the United Nations General Assembly in September.

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Senate to bar Chavez for contemptuous antics

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SENATORS finally agreed yesterday to punish lawyer Frank Chavez for showing "contemptuous" behavior to the Senate during the jueteng hearing last week.

The decision was arrived at after a closed-door meeting at the Hyatt Hotel attended by 12 majority and minority senators who are members of the Senate committees on public order and games.

The committees also agreed to indefinitely postpone the jueteng investigation until after the State of the Nation Address of the President to Congress.

"The decision of the committees is to cite Attorney Frank Chavez for contempt," Sen. Manuel Villar, chair of the public order committee, said.

But Villar ruled out detention for Chavez, saying he would only be penalized by barring him from appearing as counsel to guests in future Senate hearings.

"But we still need to discuss the exact sanction with Senate President Drilon," Villar said.

Drilon said he would await the recommendation of the committees because there are no definite sanctions provided for in the Senate rules.

It took the committees one week to act on the motion filed by Sen. Richard Gordon right after Chavez shouted and pointed at him while he was grilling his client, confessed jueteng bagwoman Sandra Cam in the Senate hearing last Tuesday.

Chavez said Gordon was treating Cam like an accused and declared he would rather be held in contempt of the Senate rather than in contempt of justice.

What Chavez did was unprecedented but unlike past "offenders," he was not punished on the spot because Villar suspended the hearings just as Gordon and Chavez were exchanging heated words.

Guests who have been deemed untruthful or making pointed remarks against senators in hearings have been held for a number of hours at the office of the Senate sergeant-at-arms.

Ten senators reportedly voted to cite Chavez for contempt while two - Alfredo Lim and Jamby Madrigal - wanted a warning to him.

Those who attended for the majority were Villar, Lito Lapid, Ramon "Bong" Revilla, Gordon and Rodolfo Biazon. and Aquilino Pimentel, Juan Ponce Enrile, Panfilo Lacson, Jinggoy Estrada, Lim and Madrigal came for the opposition.

Villar said no jueteng hearings will be held until after the SONA at the joint opening of Congress on Monday. No date has been set.

Villar said this will depend on whether there would be new witnesses and on what the priorities of the Senate would be in the coming weeks.

He said the Senate committees would no longer recall Cam and all other witnesses presented by Lingayen Archbishop Oscar Cruz.

"If he has no more witnesses, his group is done with. We will discuss if we will open a new area in the jueteng investigation," Villar said.

Suspected drug lord back in RP

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE ALLEGED owner of one of the biggest shabu laboratories in the country has come home to face drug charges against him.

Calvin Tan Sy, or Calvin de Jesus Tan, arrived last night from Hong Kong at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, according to National Bureau of Investigation Interpol chief Ricardo Diaz.

The NBI official said the Filipino-Chinese suspect was escorted by Cebu Rep. Antonio Cueco, Justice Undersecretary Ernesto Pineda, and National Bureau of Investigation Interpol agents Dominador Villanueva and James Calleja.

"Our information reveals that this high value fugitive is one of the top officers of a Chinese drug triad," Diaz said.

Tan, 29, a Chinese-Filipino who holds a Philippine passport, was arrested by customs officers in Hong Kong late last year at a ferry terminal bound for Macau.

Allegedly seized from Tan were cash totaling $820,000 in US and Hong Kong notes, as well as a small quantity of "ice" (methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu) and cocaine that police said was for the suspect's personal use.

He was also allegedly found carrying a number of passbooks to bank accounts that contained deposits amounting to $11 million.

Tan was allegedly behind the operation of three shabu laboratories and warehouses that were raided by anti-narcotics agents in Mandaue City, Cebu.

Anti-narcotics agents seized 675 kg of the drug worth P1.3 billion and arrested 11 people including three Filipinos, three Chinese, two Malaysians, two Taiwanese and one Briton.

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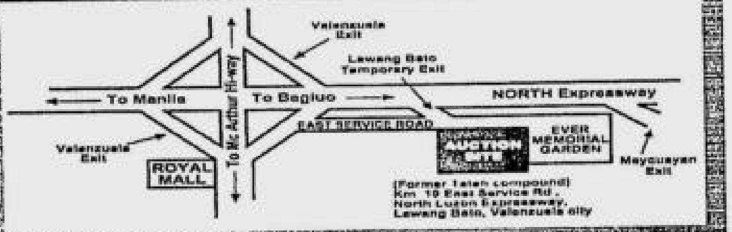
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8 out of 10 Filipinos want GMA out, says Pulse Asia poll

From page A1

For 30 percent of Filipinos, De Castro is the best person to lead the country, followed by deposed President Joseph Estrada (19 percent) and Sen. Panfilo Lacson (16 percent).

The President remained a poor fourth with 8 percent.

In Metro Manila, residents not only wanted the President out but they chose three others, Lacson (36 percent), De Castro (15 percent), and Estrada (8 percent) ahead of her (7 percent) as the best person to lead the country.

Interestingly, Susan Roces, who has shunned calls for her to join politics, was chosen by 7 percent, the same figure as that of the President, as the best person to lead the country.

Tabunda noted that the choice of best leader was the only significant difference between the July Metro Manila survey and the June nationwide survey.

In Metro Manila, the President (25 percent) emerged on top of the list of public figures unacceptable to lead the country ahead of retired Army chief Fortunato Abat (17 percent), De Castro (12 percent), Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. (12 percent), Estrada (9 percent), Roces (6 percent) and Lacson (5 percent).

Unacceptable nationwide

Nationwide, Ms Arroyo (53 percent) ranked No. 1 on the list of the most unacceptable leader for the country ahead of former President Fidel V. Ramos (25 percent), Bro. Eddie Villanueva (23 percent), Roces (23 percent) and De Castro (23 percent).

Tabunda noted that the June nationwide survey had similar results for the same question as Ms Arroyo, Ramos and Villanueva emerged the top three most unacceptable leader.

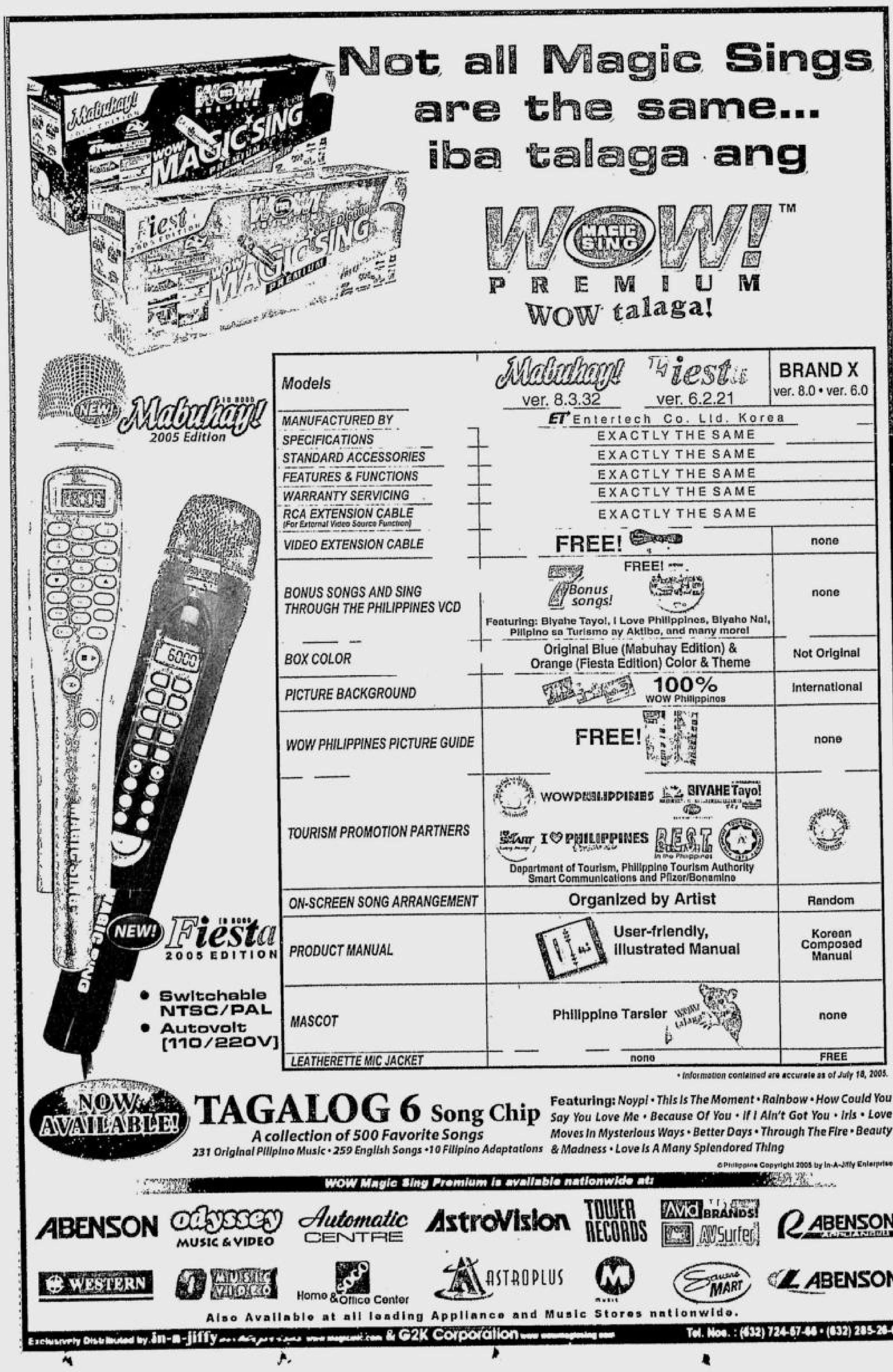
To further refute Malacañang's claim of divergent results between surveys in Metro Manila and the provinces, Tabunda said the June nationwide survey showed no evidence of an urban-rural divide in which performance and trust ratings of Ms Arroyo and opinion on her continuing to serve as president of the country are concerned.

Despite the political and economic problems, 67 percent of the people in Metro Manila believe that there is hope for the Philippines. Only 17 percent have given up hope on the country, according to Pulse Asia.

In addition, 74 percent of Metro Manilans believe that it is not necessary to impose martial law in the country. Eighteen percent are in favor of martial rule.

Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

ART FOR BURNING. An artist from an activist group, Ugat-Lahi, sculpts the face of President Arroyo's effigy which will be paraded during its planned demonstration outside the Batasang Pambansa where Ms Arroyo will deliver her State of the Nation Address on Monday. RAFFY LERMA



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ALLIANCE of labor groups and unions, including the Partido ng Masang Pilipino, hold a separate rally at Makati's central district but with the same battlecry. JESS YUSON

Atienza and Binay: Best of pals, best of foes

From page A1

cause of our] principled beliefs. We respect each other. Unlike others who are turncoats and are insincere ... you can trust Mayor Atienza in what he is fighting for."

Bonded by history

During the 1970s until the first half of the 1980s, the two mayors rallied in the streets protesting the dictatorship of strongman Ferdinand Marcos. That time, Atienza was one of the youngest opposition members in the Batasang Pambansa, while Binay was a human rights lawyer who rendered free legal assistance to victims of martial rule. Both had been in a military stockade for their anti-Marcos advocacy.

Atienza and Binay cheered the victory of democracy in 1986, when the first Edsa "People Power" revolution toppled Marcos and swept Corazon C. Aquino, widow of slain senator and staunch Marcos critic Benigno Aquino Jr., to power.

The two mayors were among Aquino's appointees to her administration: Atienza became general manager of the National Housing Authority, while Binay became acting mayor of Makati. Later, they both ran for mayor, and were elected—Atienza in Manila and Binay in Makati.

When Joseph Estrada's presidency came under attack with allegations of graft and corruption in 2000, Atienza and Binay stood behind him, even when hundreds of thousands called for the leader's ouster upon the collapse of an impeachment trial.

Ayala protest

Their taking opposite positions on the questioned Arroyo presidency was the first time Binay and Atienza took opposing sides of the political ring.

Since the start of the month, Binay, chair of the United Opposition (UNO), has led three multisectoral anti-Arroyo protests in the Ayala Triangle, Makati's business district, peaking last Wednesday with a crowd of roughly 40,000 "resign-Arroyo" advocates.

Three days later, Atienza was at the forefront of Saturday's pro-Arroyo prayer rally at the Quirino Grandstand in Manila's Rizal Park in Luneta, matching Binay's anti-Arroyo protest with a larger gathering of between 45,000 and 60,000 students, government employees and plain folk, who cheered for the controversy-hounded President.

Asked whether he would allow the opposition to stage protest actions in Manila, particularly something as huge as the one held in Makati, Atienza said: "Of course, I have always offered Luneta to them but they (anti-PGMA groups) always prefer Plaza Miranda or Liwasang Bonifacio."

Asked whether he would welcome Atienza's pro-Arroyo allies in Makati, Binay chuckled and said: "Oh, we will welcome them, because those that would come here would turn into 'resign-Arroyo' [advocates]."

Luneta rally

The opposition earlier declared that it was not only planning more rallies but was also opening new fronts in its campaign to force the resignation of Ms Arroyo. But Atienza seemed unfazed by this, saying his camp was planning no other rallies as "we do not intend to compete with anybody."

"*Wala na*, that's it (Luneta rally). We just wanted to get the sentiment of the people about the issue and we accomplished precisely just that—that the general public still wants to adhere to the rule of law. I understand their (opposition) kind of thinking. But we do not mean to compete with them or with anybody," he said.

In his loyalty to Ms Arroyo, Atienza had also disclaimed the declared unanimous decision of the Liberal Party, which he chaired, to turn its back on the President for allegations of election rigging with the release of the "Hello Garci?" tapes, and the tagging of presidential husband Jose Miguel Arroyo, and son, Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, in taking "jueteng" payola.

One common target

Atienza and Binay do share one pressing advocacy: their ongoing offensive against Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando.

"We have a common target: Chairman Bayani Fernando. Our fight on the leadership of the MMDA continues. I'm telling you, we have a common stand on the misguided leadership of the MMDA," said Binay.

The mayor, himself a former MMDA chair, went on to describe as "very, very, very, very strong" he and Atienza's ongoing battle against Fernando, an Arroyo appointee and administration loyalist who, on the other hand, has stood steadfast on his management strategy.

Binay and Atienza, as members of the Metro Mayors League, had been among the leading critics of Fernando's policies, particularly on traffic management.

Political dynasty

The two high profile mayors had also been accused of building political dynasties by their opponents during the last local election.

Atienza's son, Kim, a former councilor, ran for congressman but lost. Kim now serves as the executive director of the city's Manila Employment Services Office (MESO) and chair of the Task Force Kaayusan. Atienza's other son, Arnold, is presently the chair of the Manila Sports Council. His son-in-law Miles Roces, of the publishing clan and political family, is the congressman of the city's third district.

Binay's wife Elenita was former mayor of Makati, and his son Jejomar Erwin or Jun-jun is a second-term councilor of the first district. Binay is said to be grooming Jun-Jun to follow in his footsteps to City Hall.

Have the two mayors seen or spoken to each other since they've taken two opposing sides?

Atienza said he and Binay would see each other when they attend Sunday Mass. "We're still the best of friends. We even go to the same church (Sacred Heart Parish). It's our favorite church. Jojo (Binay) and I have mutual respect for each other," he said.

Binay said the church was in San Antonio Village, Makati, where his family resides. "We are the best of friends... We respect each other... This is all part of the essence of democracy. We need tolerance and accommodation," he said.

Loren trying to win protest in media, says Noli's lawyer

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE LAWYER of Vice President Noli de Castro yesterday accused former Sen. Loren Legarda of trying to win the election protest that she filed before the Presidential Electoral Tribunal via trial by publicity.

Romulo Macalintal, De Castro's lead counsel in the PET, said Legarda was misleading both the public and PET members by presenting documents pointing to alleged fraud committed in areas which were not covered in her protest in connection with the 2004 vice presidential contest.

"There she goes again. And looks like we have not seen the end of it yet," Macalintal said, referring to Legarda's latest presentation of evidence to the media of alleged tampered election returns, including the presidential election.

"Ms. Legarda appears too desperate in her bid to win the Vice Presidential post. She failed to realize that if the returns she showed media are fake, these cannot be admitted as evidence by the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET)," Macalintal stressed.

He said it was not the first time that the Legarda camp resorted to media in seeking redress of her grievances despite the fact that her protest was already being tackled by the PET, which was composed of all the Supreme Court justices.

Macalintal said that Legarda forgot that in her manifestation, she herself admitted that all the returns coming from Congress which she wanted to be recanvassed were genuine and duly executed.

That being so, Macalintal explained, she cannot change or amend her position now before the media through the expediency of a press conference.

"She has to present her case before the PET. Perhaps she had realized that cannot make it legally at PET so she is trying to win her case via trial by publicity," he said.

Earlier, Macalintal dared Legarda to put her allegations and computations under oath.

He also challenged her camp to submit her tenuous election complaints to the PET verified under oath if indeed she believed in her charges against de Castro.

But Legarda defended her use of the mass media in exposing what she claimed were the irregularities that marked the elections.

"What is he afraid of? Does the truth hound them?" Legarda told the INQUIRER when asked to comment on Macalintal's statement.

Legarda said it was "of urgent national interest that the public should know about the truth of the 2004 elections."

She continued: "The public has a right to information on matters of public interest. This is especially true in case of elections in which the sovereign will of the people has been expressed to choose their representatives in Congress, their local officials and, more important, the highest government executives, namely, the President and Vice President."

Legarda said that because of the "Hello Garci" tape exposure, most Filipinos now believed that the 2004 election was tainted with massive fraud, especially the presidential and vice presidential canvassing of votes, as shown in the latest surveys of independent pollsters.

GMA steps into pre-need mess

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is finally stepping in to untangle the pre-need insurance mess by providing quick, financial support to 1.4 million plan holders that would enable them to continue their studies this school year.

"I am instructing the Cabinet to step up the implementation of the second phase of our the economic agenda. I intend to win the people's trust with good governance and urgent reforms," said the President in a speech during the 107th anniversary of the Department of Foreign Affairs in Malacañang yesterday.

The President cited education, specifically pre-need plan holders, cheap medicine, health insurance, and water and electricity as the areas of concern in her reform agenda.

"I have instructed our Ched (Commission on Higher Education) and working with other friends in other branches of government to find a way to have release for those students who enrolled under the pre-need education plans, so that they will be able to take their examinations. These are hard things we have to do, but we have to do them," said the President.

Some 1.4 million plan holders of the financially-distressed pre-need firms College Assurance Plan (CAP), Pacific Plans and Platinum Plans are in danger of missing school this year because of delays in the payment of their tuition fees.

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'Gloria still her own best PR'

LETTING her "natural self" show is still the best "PR" for President Macapagal-Arroyo, says a senior Cabinet member in reaction to latest efforts by Palace spin doctors to give her a "friendlier" persona and redeem her scandal-battered image.

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo insisted that the latest dips in Ms Arroyo's popularity ratings were traceable not to her personality but to the "political capital she spent" as a consequence of her "unpopular" economic reforms such as new taxes.

"The President in her natural self is at her best. She's sincere and she knows what she's doing," Romulo said in last Monday's Diplomats Night hosted by the Manila Overseas Press Club at the Makati Shangri-la Hotel.

"I like her as she is. It's good to be natural," he said.

Volt Contreras

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, July 20, 2005
16th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Ex 16:1-5,9-15
Gospel: Matthew 13:1-9

Jesus left the house and sat down by the lakeside. As many people gathered around him, he got in a boat. There he sat while the whole crowd stood on the shore, and he spoke to them in parables about many things.

Jesus said, "The sower went out to sow and, as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground where there was little soil, and the seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was not deep. But as soon the sun rose the plants were scorched and withered because they had no roots. Again other seeds fell among thistles; and the thistles grew and choked the plants. Still other seeds fell on good soil and produced a crop; some produced a hundredfold, others sixty and others thirty. If you have ears, then hear!"

Commentary

Jesus sits in a boat (on water) and tells them a story about a farmer sowing seed. The seed falls on the path, eaten by birds, on hard ground with a thin layer of soil that grabs at the seed but has no staying power in changes of weather; falls among thistles by the side of field and road and grows but choked and finally in the field. There is a harvest—different levels of growth and amount of grain: one hundred, sixty, thirty fold. If you have ears, hear! We've heard it so many times—but are we the field. The Word of God has been sown in us year after year and what is our harvest of justice, of peace, of hope and life for the poor, of truth and integrity. The Word is for the world and others that need it, for food, for survival and basic necessities for all—are we anywhere in the category of one hundred fold? Is there a harvest of justice in our world at all where 85 percent of the world goes to bed at night? Or has the seed fallen on hard ground?

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Ni Peachy delos Santos

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Gonzalez sitting on $2-M bribery complaint vs Perez

From page A1

The senior prosecutor told the INQUIRER that Gonzalez had refused to ask for legal assistance from his counterpart in Hong Kong in getting the bank records of Perez and his cohorts, effectively stopping the Office of the Ombudsman from investigating the complaint.

The prosecutor said the Office of the Ombudsman had been requesting Gonzalez since November last year to "seek legal assistance" from the justice secretary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HK-SAR) in the criminal investigation of Perez, Ernest de Leon Escaler, Romeo Arceo and several John and Jane Does.

Arceo is a former director of United Coconut Planters' Bank and executive vice president of PCIBank, while Escaler is a former consultant of Coutts Bank for the Philippines.

"We have sent him a follow-up letter almost every month but Secretary Gonzalez has been sitting on it," the prosecutor said.

The Office of the Ombudsman was responding to the request in 2003 of the Swiss government, which was then investigating Perez for allegedly laundering $2 million in a Swiss bank account, according to the Department of Justice. Money laundering is the process of disguising illegal sources of funds from criminal activities.

The Office of the Ombudsman would need the bank records, sworn statements and other pertinent documents related to Perez to establish a "paper trail" of the origin of the $2 million in alleged bribe, which found its way into Coutts Bank in Hong Kong on Feb. 23, 2001.

"The last word we heard is that Secretary Gonzalez wanted to know if all the necessary documents were complete. He said he just wanted to be sure," the prosecutor, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said.

Insulted

Gonzalez acknowledged taking some time before acting on a request of the Swiss Embassy that it be furnished documents on the "Escaler case."

But Gonzalez said he had already turned over the documents to the Department of Foreign Affairs, which was to send the materials to the Swiss Embassy, about three months ago.

"At the first instance, I did not want to give it due course because I felt insulted by the Swiss government. It does not mean that when embassies ask us for something, we have to jump right away," he told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Gonzalez was referring to the first request of the Swiss Embassy, which was coursed through the Office of the Ombudsman, which in turn brought the matter to Gonzalez.

"I have to say this because I want to be candid about it," he said of his admission that he initially sat on the request.

Impsa deal

The criminal investigation stemmed from a complaint filed by Jimenez that Perez, the first justice secretary of President Macapagal-Arroyo, had asked for $2 million in January 2001 just days after Ms Arroyo assumed the presidency.

Jimenez filed the plunder charges with the Office of the Ombudsman on Dec. 23, 2002.

Perez had demanded that he execute an affidavit against cronies of Estrada, which would be used against them if they would not support Ms Arroyo in 2004, according to Jimenez.

He said that when he refused, Perez cursed and threatened him in front of his wife. It was Escaler who suggested that he just pay up $2 million, to which Perez agreed, according to Jimenez.

Jimenez said he wired the amount to Account No. HO 13706 in the Coutts Bank in Hong Kong on Feb. 23, 2001. The account was later traced to Escaler.

Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson claimed that the $2 million came from a $14-million bribe for the approval of the contract for the Caliraya-Botocan-Kalayaan hydroelectric plant won by the Industrias Metalurgicas Pescamora Sociedad Anonima (Impsa).

Perez reportedly endorsed the contract, which was approved during the Estrada administration. He has denied the allegation.

Former Bulacan Rep. Willie Villarama had said the $2 million was different from the $14-million bribe for the approval of the Impsa contract.

Confidential memo

In a confidential memorandum dated July 12, 2004, the Ombudsman asked the DOJ "to make the proper representation with the Honorable Secretary of Justice of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HK-SAR) in securing copies of the pertinent bank records and documents pertaining to Account No. HO 13706 maintained in Coutts Bank, Hong Kong, as well as the sworn statements and/or affidavits of possible witnesses pursuant to the existing and operative bilateral RP-HK-SAR Agreement Concerning Mutual Legal Assistance on Criminal Matters."

The memo was addressed to acting Justice Secretary Merceditas Gutierrez, who was replaced by Gonzalez in the same month.

The request for legal assistance was made under the RP-HKSAR Agreement Concerning Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters.

The amount of $1,999,965 was transferred from the Trade and Commerce Bank Cayman Islands to Account No. HO 13706 Coutts Bank, Hong Kong, on Feb. 23, 2001, according to the memo.

The Coutts Bank account was allegedly owned and maintained by Escaler, according to the memo.

Fund transfers

The memo said that on March 6, 2001, $1 million was transferred from Coutts Bank Account No. HO 13706 to an unidentified account in EFG Private Bank Branch in Singapore.

On May 23, 2001, three fund transfers were made from Account No. HO 13706, according to the memo. The fund transfers included $250,000 in bank draft issued to Ramon C. Arceo, brother-in-law of Perez; $200,000 to an unidentified account of Escaler in Citibank, Manila; and $700,000 to an unidentified account at EFG Private Bank Branch in Singapore.

"This request for legal assistance is intended to secure authentic and admissible evidence for purposes of substantiating the veracity of allegations of the complainant and for possible criminal prosecution in court against former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, Ernest de Leon Escaler, Ramon Antonio Castillo Arceo; and John and Jane Does," according to the memo.

The Ombudsman would need "authentic or certified true copies" of the complete records of Account No. HO 13706 which allegedly belonged to Escaler and the complete records "of any and all bank accounts" in Hong Kong which may be pertinent to the request, the memo also said.

Records of deposits, transfers

The bank records requested by the Ombudsman would have included signature cards, documents of account opening, account ledger cards, periodic account statements, records of withdrawals, deposits and transfers, wire transfer documents, correspondence to and from the account holders as well as all memoranda related to the account, an Ombudsman official also said.

The DOJ request for legal assistance would also have allowed the Ombudsman to gain access to sworn affidavits pertaining to the identity of the persons who opened the account, the circumstances under which the accounts were opened, the nature and structure of each account, the sources of deposits as well as the identity of the persons ordering such deposits and disposition, according to the memo.

The memo said Perez, Escaler, Arceo and the John/Jane Does were being investigated for possible plunder, graft and corruption, robbery through extortion, direct bribery as well as violations of Presidential Decree No. 46 and Republic Act No. 7613.

As justice secretary, only Perez would be liable for violation of PD 46, which imposes punishment on government officials who accept or give gifts; and RA 7613, which defines the code of conduct and ethical standards for public officials and employees.

Perez went on a 30-day leave after the bribery scandal broke out in 2002. But he was never reinstated.

Bad experience

Gonzalez explained his action, saying that the country had had a bad experience with foreign governments or their embassies, which were also slow in acting on the Philippine government's requests.

He cited, for example, the long years it took for the Swiss government to act on the request of the Philippines that it be furnished bank documents and other key information relative to the Marcos wealth.

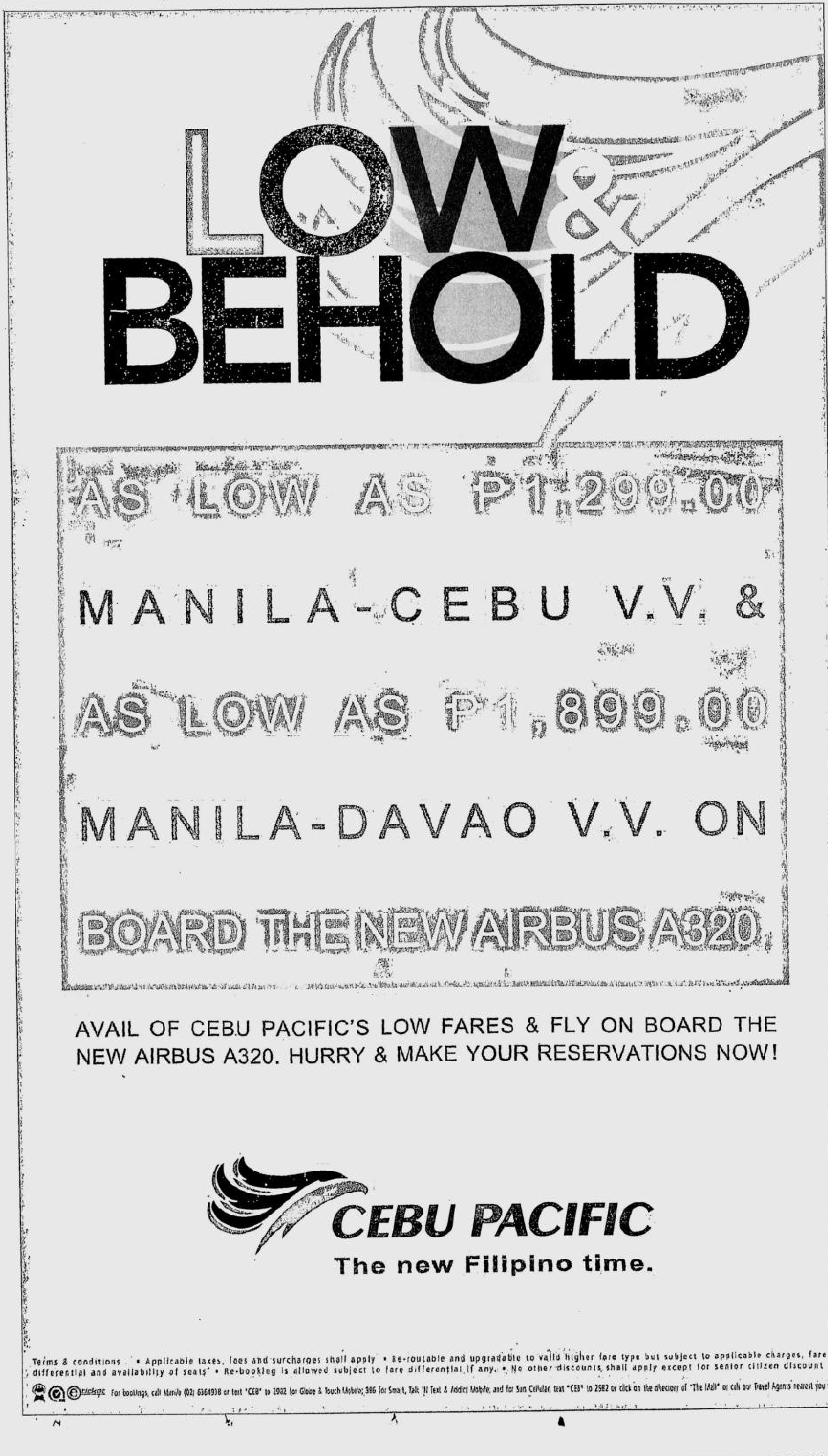
"How long did we work on the Marcos wealth?" he asked.

When he received the first request from the Swiss government, Gonzalez recalled telling Chief State Counsel Ricardo Paras III "to hold it so we can study it."

But he said he decided to act on it when the second request came.

"I have already sent the documents to the DFA, it's no longer with me," he said.

Gonzalez denied having sat on the matter to save Perez. He said the issue had been used against him during the hearing of the Commission on Appointments.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Pagcor linked to drive to kill impeach complaint

From page A1

chair had been calling up several members of the minority and majority blocs in the chamber as part of a well-funded drive by the administration to save the Arroyo presidency.

The administration congressman told the INQUIRER that Pagcor chair Efraim Genuino had asked him not to endorse the impeachment complaint filed last month by lawyer Oliver Lozano.

"Yes, he (Genuino) called me up," said the lawmaker who asked not to be identified.

The lawmaker's claim drew a swift denial from a Pagcor official.

"That's not true. We're very apolitical. We're not involved in that," Pagcor spokesperson Edward King said in a phone interview.

Not for sale

King said that Pagcor officials had no dealings with lawmakers except to attend an ongoing House inquiry into Pagcor's privatization. On these occasions, it's usually Pagcor president Rafael Francisco who attends the hearings, he added.

The administration congressman's denunciation of an administration plan to derail the impeachment process came as opposition lawmakers said they would file up to 10 criminal charges, including election fraud and corruption, against Ms Arroyo.

The lawmaker said Genuino did not dangle any specific amount to convince him to go all-out for Ms Arroyo.

"The conversation did not reach that point because I already made clear to him early on that I'm not for sale," the lawmaker said, adding that he would vote according to his conscience.

But he added: "Genuino ... will play a very crucial part [in the impeachment process] because the money could come from Pagcor."

House inner circle

Another administration lawmaker, who also asked not to be identified, confirmed that an inner circle made up of House leaders had drawn up a plan to block the impeachment complaint against Ms Arroyo.

The lawmaker said Malacañang's allies in the chamber had dangled offers, including pork barrel funds, to lawmakers to dissuade them from voting in favor of the impeachment complaint.

"There's an offer. There's a list. All members of Lakas are being called. No one is exempted," the lawmaker said.

At least 79 lawmakers—one-third of the 236-member House of Representatives—must approve the impeachment complaint before it is referred to the Senate, which will act as a trial court.

He said the Department of Budget and Management had yet to release the 2004 pork barrel allocations of House members.

"The congressmen are caught in a bind because their constituents have been pressing them to fulfill their pledges in terms of infrastructure and livelihood projects. The money will prove irresistible to many," the lawmaker said.

Santa coming to town

According to him, among the first ones to be contacted by the House's "inner circle" were Pasig Rep. Robert Jaworski Jr. and several congressmen from Visayas and Mindanao.

Representatives Jaworski and Edmund Reyes bolted the ruling party Lakas-CMD at the height of the congressional inquiry into the "Gloriagate" audio tapes.

The lawmaker said several opposition lawmakers had also been approached.

Iloilo Rep. Rolex Suplico earlier said some Malacañang officials had phoned members of the minority, including San Juan Rep. Ronaldo Zamora and Agusan del Sur Rep. Rodolfo Plaza, to junk the Lozano complaint.

"Santa Claus is coming to town," said Suplico, stressing that Malacañang would return the favor by releasing money in the guise of pork barrel allocations.

The administration lawmaker, who asked not to be identified, said the House inner circle had already "strategized" last week to ensure that all members of the administration coalition would not endorse the impeachment complaint.

"In exchange for continued support for Ms Arroyo, each of them will be given P1 million worth of soft projects," said the lawmaker.

Looking for witnesses

Opposition lawmakers are looking for witnesses among the 13 former Cabinet members and top aides who have quit the Arroyo administration in recent weeks—some of whom said they were willing to testify against their former boss.

Imelda Nicolas, who quit as head of the government's antipoverty commission, said she and other ex-Cabinet members were willing to testify "if we know something relevant to the charges."

Another ex-Cabinet member, who declined to be identified for fear of reprisal, said some of them were familiar with allegedly questionable government transactions, including the release of emergency disaster funds to woo political leaders.

The opposition concedes that dominant pro-Arroyo lawmakers could kill an impeachment complaint if they vote along party lines—a prospect many fear could set off a military uprising or another "people power" revolt.

The lawmakers and private lawyers scrambled to prepare charges, evidence and witness rosters in time to file an impeachment complaint by Thursday, said Representative Zamora, head of the opposition's legal team.

Congress will convene next week. An impeachment trial—the second in four years in this deeply divided country—would be a politically explosive exercise amid a backdrop of anti-Arroyo protests and rumors about brewing coups.

"Our charges against her would revolve around the crimes of cheating, lying and stealing," House Minority Leader Francis Escudero said.

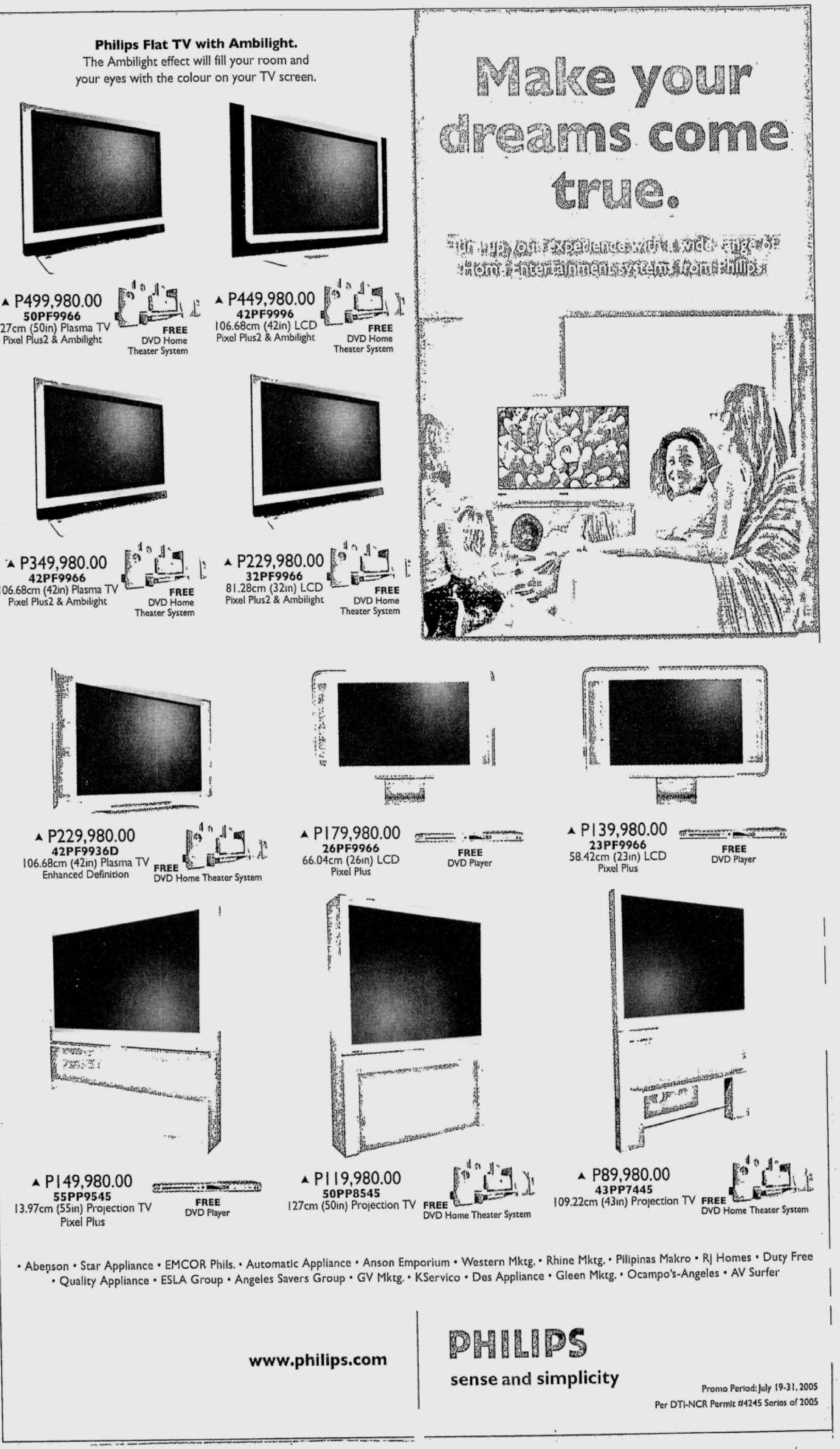
The main charge centers on allegations that Ms Arroyo rigged last year's closely contested presidential election, but Zamora said there could be up to 10 criminal offenses that she may have committed during more than four years in power.

He said the opposition would give Ms Arroyo her "day in court," but urged her to step down to avoid a drawn-out process. *With reports from TJ Burgonio and AP*

SUPLICO: Santa Claus is coming to town.

HELLO ... It's me, Efraim Genuino. Opposition congressmen claim that Pagcor's top honcho has been keeping their lines busy allegedly to kill the impeachment complaint.

REP. RONALDO ZAMORA: Lead prosecutor gets a call.



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GMA to form truth commission

From page A1

simply dismiss calls for my resignation from office, and that through prayer, we can arrive at decisions for the common good that are based on moral precepts," Ms Arroyo said in her letter to Capalla.

"On the matter of moral accountability and the need to restore trust, I have initiated the creation of a commission or similar body to look into the truth behind the issues recently raised against me," she said.

Battling for political survival after a wave of Cabinet resignations hit her, Ms Arroyo said she hoped such a commission would also look into the fact that the accusations against her came "at a time and in a manner that seems to give credence to the observation that various groups may be manipulating situations for their own agenda, perhaps with the aim of grabbing power."

"I am hopeful that the process of searching for the truth will shed light on these disturbing matters as well," Ms Arroyo said.

Presidential EO

Calls for Ms Arroyo to resign were spurred by supposed wiretapped conversations between her and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano dealing with an alleged plan to pad her vote in last year's presidential election.

Close relatives of Ms Arroyo were also accused of taking bribes from "jueteng" operators.

Ms Arroyo and her family have denied the allegations.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye Jr. read the Pressident's letter on radio and television.

Ground rules

Bunye told reporters that Ms Arroyo would issue an executive order creating the probe commission and that she would be consulting "various stakeholders," like the CBCP, in selecting its members.

"The President would like to have this created, or at least some of the members of the commission made known, before the State of the Nation Address next week," Bunye said.

He said it would be the commission members who would "come up with ground rules which will govern the conduct of the investigation."

Asked how Malacañang could ensure the commission would not be biased for Ms Arroyo, Bunye said he was sure that upon consultations between Ms Arroyo and the CBCP, the bishops would come up with people of "integrity and probity."

In her letter to Capalla, Ms Arroyo said she read the CBCP's July 10 joint statement on the current crisis "with a deep sense of appreciation for their profound concern for the country and our people."

Mistrust of gov't

Ms Arroyo said she was saddened to realize that "our people now so mistrust [the] political system."

She added: "As President, I am greatly humbled to realize that I now owe the Filipino people a huge debt of service, a debt that to the best of the abilities that God has given me, I must now try to repay."

Ms Arroyo said she had also taken to heart the bishops' admonition "to discern deeply as to whether the erosion of trust is so severe as to be irreversible."

"I believe that subsequent events and revelations may have given a more balanced view to this question, and that my decision to stay in my office is the correct one," she said.

She defended her decision not to resign:

"If we allow our country's President to be pressured to resign under these circumstances, when the issues raised might have speculative or controvertible basis, then we expose our already weakened political system ... to the possibility of never ending political crises of a similar nature in the future."

'We're all sinners'

The President said: "Having made my decision, I have tried to make my peace with God as well. I trust in His infinite mercy and capacity to forgive all of us who are sinners."

She added: "I am hopeful that others, being human and so perhaps less compassionate than the Lord, may still find their way to setting aside a space in their hearts for me."

Ms Arroyo thanked the bishops for their guidance and closed her letter: "I wish to let them know that trusting completely in the Lord, I have surrendered myself to His will."

"Our initial reaction is one of welcome," said CBCP secretary general Msgr. Hernando Coronel. "We are united with her in prayer and discernment."

Later, in a television interview, Coronel said: "This [commission] has to be impartial, this has to be objective, this has to be above politics ... This is a truth commission and we are after the truth. But what will we do with its findings?"

Capalla cautious

Capalla reacted with caution. "We respect the government's choice of this option," he said in a text message. "At the moment we cannot comment on the viability of this option."

Archbishop Cruz said it was important to determine what the commission would do in case it found out the "truth" about Ms Arroyo's supposed phone conversations with Garcillano.

"There are still many things that are not clear to me regarding this commission."

Cruz suggested that only people competent on matters like procedural inquiry and evaluation of evidence be appointed.

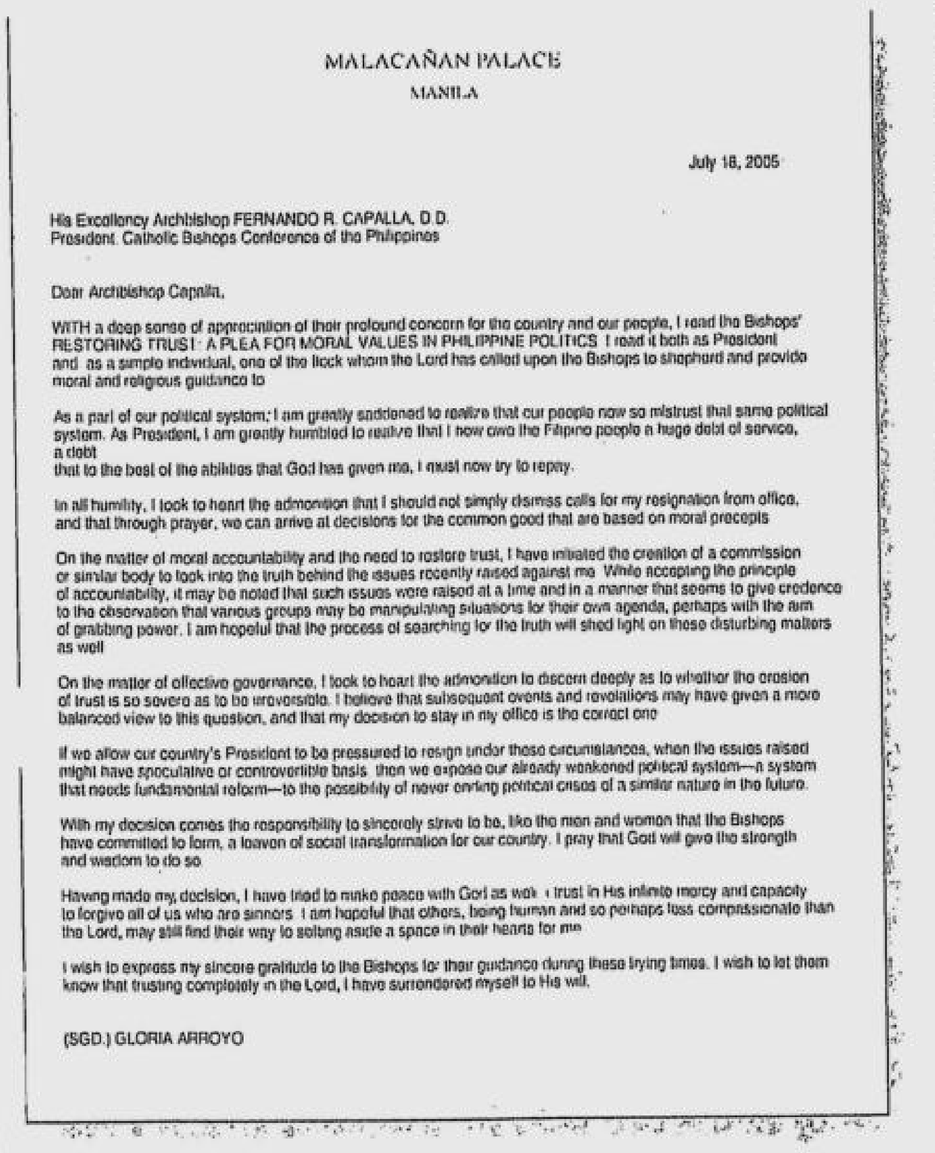
He floated the names of former Senate President Jovito Salonga, former Justice Ines Luciano, and former Commission on Elections Chairs Christian Monsod and Haydee Yorac.

'Purely political'

Bishop Deogracias Iniguez, head of the CBCP commission on public affairs, said prelates would mostly likely not join the proposed commission if its function would be "purely political."

"It depends on the purpose," he said.

The CBCP on Monday expressed support for the establishment of such a commission to "lay the groundwork for an impeachment process."



MALACAÑAN PALACE
MANILA

July 18, 2005

His Excellency Archbishop FERNANDO R. CAPALLA, D.D.
President, Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines

Dear Archbishop Capalla,

WITH a deep sense of appreciation of their profound concern for the country and our people, I read the Bishops' RESTORING TRUST: A PLEA FOR MORAL VALUES IN PHILIPPINE POLITICS. I read it both as President and as a simple individual, one of the flock whom the Lord has called upon the Bishops to shepherd and provide moral and religious guidance to

As a part of our political system, I am greatly saddened to realize that our people now so mistrust that same political system. As President, I am greatly humbled to realize that I now owe the Filipino people a huge debt of service, a debt that to the best of the abilities that God has given me, I must now try to repay.

In all humility, I look to heart the admonition that I should not simply dismiss calls for my resignation from office, and that through prayer, we can arrive at decisions for the common good that are based on moral precepts

On the matter of moral accountability and the need to restore trust, I have initiated the creation of a commission or similar body to look into the truth behind the issues recently raised against me. While accepting the principle of accountability, it may be noted that such issues were raised at a time and in a manner that seems to give credence to the observation that various groups may be manipulating situations for their own agenda, perhaps with the aim of grabbing power. I am hopeful that the process of searching for the truth will shed light on these disturbing matters as well

On the matter of effective governance, I look to heart the admonition to discern deeply as to whether the erosion of trust is so severe as to be irreversible. I believe that subsequent events and revelations may have given a more balanced view to this question, and that my decision to stay in my office is the correct one

If we allow our country's President to be pressured to resign under these circumstances, when the issues raised might have speculative or controvertible basis, then we expose our already weakened political system—a system that needs fundamental reform—to the possibility of never ending political crises of a similar nature in the future.

With my decision comes the responsibility to sincerely strive to be, like the men and women that the Bishops have committed to form, a leaven of social transformation for our country. I pray that God will give the strength and wisdom to do so.

Having made my decision, I have tried to make peace with God as well. I trust in His infinite mercy and capacity to forgive all of us who are sinners. I am hopeful that others, being human and so perhaps less compassionate than the Lord, may still find their way to setting aside a space in their hearts for me

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Bishops for their guidance during these trying times. I wish to let them know that trusting completely in the Lord, I have surrendered myself to His will.

(SGD.) GLORIA ARROYO

DEAR-BISHOPS letter from President Arroyo admits public mistrust in government is rampant. Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye reads it to the media during the regular press briefing at the Palace.

Illegal, say legal eagles; diversionary, say critics

From page A1

He added: "Even bar flunkers know that."

The former senator, now a counsel for deposed President Joseph Estrada in the plunder trial at the Sandiganbayan, said a commission was also impractical considering the need for highly credible individuals who would be willing to drop their respective businesses to take on what he expected would be a protracted task.

Diversionary tactic?

"Where will you find the people who can deal with this, a set of people who will set aside everything else?" he asked.

Saguisag said that going through election records could take as long as 10 years.

He raised another question. "Will a law be enacted for the [creation of the commission]? I don't know if it can be done by presidential fiat."

The opposition also dismissed Ms Arroyo's move as a diversionary tactic aimed at sidestepping the impeachment process while trying to appease the Catholic Church.

Adding to the chaos

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero and San Juan Rep. Ronaldo Zamora warned that such a commission could further worsen the political crisis, saying that Congress and such a commission might reach different conclusions about the allegations against Ms Arroyo.

Escudero also noted that a commission had no constitutional basis and it could not force the President to resign should it determine that she was guilty of graft and she cheated in the elections.

"We do not favor it. It is a distraction from the impeachment process. And what if its findings differ from that of Congress? That will add to the chaos," Escudero said.

"Can they force her out of office? Does its findings have any binding effect? Instead of providing closure to this crisis, it will only add to the confusion. It's meant to convince, placate and appease certain sectors."

Both Escudero and Zamora pointed out that the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines had also recommended that the impeachment process should proceed if the President refused to resign.

Somewhere else

"Remember? They were the ones who pushed us to proceed with impeachment. Now that we're already here, they might as well help us," Zamora said.

"The President's allies also said that we should bring our complaints to Congress. But now that we did, they're trying to lead us somewhere else," Escudero said.

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Escudero warned that the administration might even use the proposed commission to water down the impeachment process.

"They might say this or that charge should not be included in the [impeachment] complaint because the commission is already taking it up," he said.

Escudero also questioned the impartiality of a commission whose members would be chosen by Ms Arroyo.

"It's going to be created through an EO [executive order] and she would be the one to choose its members. Is that fair?" he said.

South African precedent

Zamora cited a historical precedent in South Africa, which also formed a truth commission to look into different issues relating to the apartheid period in that country.

He said that was different from what the Church and civil society groups in the Philippines were calling for, which was an investigative body like the Agrava Fact-Finding Commission, which looked into the 1983 Aquino-Galman double murder case.

"I think it would be wrong to use the (South African commission) as an example when, clearly, you are talking about a very specific case involving several telephone conversations," Zamora said. He was referring to the so-called "Gloriagate tapes" involving controversial phone conversations between Ms Arroyo and an election commissioner.

Militant voices

Militant groups also rejected Ms Arroyo's plan.

"This will not stop the massive protest actions calling for Arroyo's ouster," Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas spokesperson Carl Ala said.

Pamalakaya information officer Gerry Corpuz said: "Mrs. Arroyo's commission will empower her to act as prober, judge and executioner. This makes no sense and insults the collective intelligence ... of 84 million Filipinos. She thinks we're not thinking." *With a report from Blanche S. Rivera*

Wonder kid from Mindoro a Grade 1 dropout

From page A1

we call him," the boy's mother Marynol said.

Adi turned 4 on April 16.

In June, Adi went to school for the first time at the Good Shepherd Academy. He was immediately placed in Grade 1.

"When asked to draw a flag, he drew the whole campus with buildings, trees and students in line," Marynol said.

"He often told his teachers 'I know that already' and asked several questions like why is there a need to write?" she added.

He reminded his classmates to behave. "Can't you read that (pointing to a sign, 'Please keep quiet')," Adi told them.

Classmates asked him to read books to them, amazed at his ability.

Too advanced

He surprised the girls with this warning: "Don't kiss me or you'll become my girlfriend."

After two weeks, he stopped attending school because he said he already knew the lessons.

Principal Vic del Ayre said Adi was too advanced for Grade 1.

Just recently, his parents discovered he could write legibly in long hand.

Adi likes to watch "Playschool" and "Shrek 2" on VCD. But he keeps asking questions like "Is Shrek an animal or is he human?"

Also, he's glued to cable TV, preferring to watch the Australian Channel, Fox News, Star Movies and National Geographic.

Adi also imitates Mike Enriquez's lines: "*Di namin kayo tatantanan* (We won't stop until you do something)!"

Recently, Adrian Sr. borrowed a video camera and recorded what his son could do from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The INQUIRER was shown a copy of the video.

Gifted child

Among other things, Adi explained the solar system, named the biggest and smallest continents, the 12 months of the year, the 7 days of the week and the different parts of speech.

Adi added and subtracted three digit numbers and explained how he got the answers. He read the clock, related stories and made some up.

"Today is Monday, June 13, 2005," he said. "Yesterday was Sunday. Tomorrow is Tuesday."

"He knew all of these [when he was] 3. We're only able to record it recently," said Adrian Sr.

Recently, his father got a computer so Adi could read up on robots using Encarta. He also loves the SIMS video game.

Genes

His parents modestly explained that Adi could not have inherited his exceptional genes from them. His mother, Marynol Alvarez Maronilla, 25, a Commerce graduate, major in management, was a city scholar. His father, Adrian Maronilla Sr., 23, is a teacher of Biology and MAPEH (Music, Arts, PE and Health) at the Aurelio Arago National High School.

Adrian Sr. said Adi could have gotten the genes from his fourth-generation relatives like Atanacio Vasquez Maronilla, former Overseas Workers Welfare Administration administrator, Ramon Calleja Fernandez, former associate justice of the Supreme Court, Manuel Maronilla Calleja, first governor of Albay and Nicanor Maronilla, founder of Far Eastern College.

Marynol said the family also had mathematicians on her mother's side.

Catholic prayers

Adi's evening lullaby is Bible reading.

According to his mother, "His favorite is from the New Testament, Matthew 5:1-12 which goes, 'Happy are the poor in spirit.'"

He recited several Catholic prayers, eyes closed, to the INQUIRER.

The church where Adi's family would go for Mass had an image of a chicken in the tower.

He asked parish priest Willy Abas, "How did the chicken get there (pointing at the tower)?" Adi would not believe that someone had used a ladder.

He also asked another priest, "If the wine is the blood of Christ, are you a vampire?"

Another planet

When he was 3, Adi planted mongo which he watered every morning. "They're funny like swans!" he described the sprout.

Then he planted tomato but left them with his grandmother. "I want to make a forest here [in front of the house] for animals to live in ... like in Quezon."

One time, he heard the song "Heal the World" and asked his father, "How come the world is sick?"

His father told him about the problems of the world, including people who didn't care about the environment.

Adi became worried and said: "I'll teach them how to become good citizens by throwing garbage properly. Or maybe we have to look for another planet."

Discipline

"Ma, why you have to spank? Talk to me nicely," Adi once told his mom.

"So I asked him to stay in a corner," Marynol said.

Adi realized his mistake, went to his mom and said, "I'm sorry," and they embraced.

Once Adi caught his mom talking about another person and told her off: "Don't judge other people."

When his mom accidentally hurt herself, he said, "It's OK, forgive yourself."

At times, he would spell out a touching "I LOVE YOU, MOMMY," which would tug at Marynol's heart strings.

When Adi's parents fought, he would ask "Why? That's bad ... Tsk! Tsk!"

To please his father, Adi said he wanted to be a lawyer "so I can help the poor and the innocent."

To please his mother, he said he wanted to be a doctor "so I can help the poor and the sick."

Then he would blurt out, "I want to be a bat (as in Batman, his favorite this summer although he has never watched the film) not BUTT!" which he would spell out loud.

One in a million

Adi's parents consulted local leaders regarding Adi's exceptional development.

Eve Orbeta, former principal of a parochial school, said Adi could be one in a million and suggested he be brought to Manila where there were schools for gifted children like him.

Director Paraluman Geron of the Department of Education Region 4 (Mimaropa) said his office didn't have the facilities for Adi in Mindoro. But he would ask friends from the University of the Philippines and the Philippine Normal University to send the appropriate curriculum for Adi's talents.

Help needed

Adi is the wonder child every parent dreams of. However, according to his parents, they are ill-equipped to handle their boy genius.

"He is sensitive to sounds and always asks about them. He loves instruments but we can't buy him any ... he wants an organ," Marynol said.

Adrian Sr., who would spend most of his time researching answers to Adi's questions, added: "He has a lot of questions. One time we were walking and he asked, 'Why is there left and right?'"

"We love it here in Mindoro, but for Adi's sake, we're open to moving out. We want the best for him," said Marynol.

(Those who want to help Adi may call Marynol at 0920-2808155 or Adrian Sr. at 0920-8293089)

Single canvassing area for ARMM eyed

By Jerome Aning

THE COMMISSION on Elections yesterday said it is considering a single canvassing area per province in the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao on August 8.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. told reporters that all ballot boxes from the region's 4,000 precincts would be brought to the canvassing area for counting.

This, he said, would dispel accusations that members of the boards of election inspectors – usually public school teachers – are favoring or are being frightened to favor one candidate or political party.

To avoid allegations that election returns were "pre-filled" or tampered with, all ERs would be distributed during the counting in the center, Abalos added.

The votes would then be totaled by district and the certificates of canvass provided to the representatives of the political parties. After this, the regional COC would be finalized.

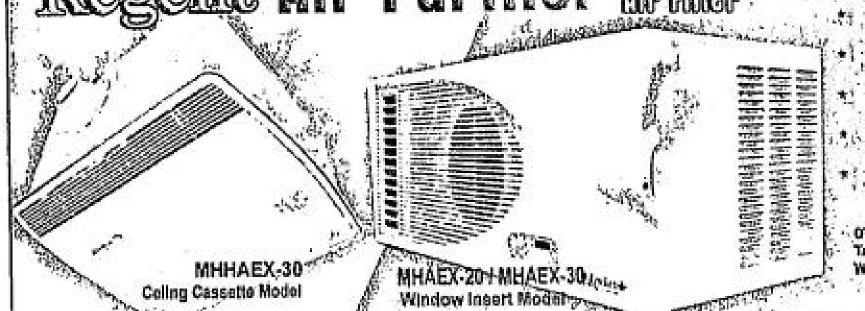
The Comelec chair said ARMM officials he spoke with during their conference in Cotabato City last Monday wholly agreed to his plan and hoped that the elections would be clean.

CWL to hold special day of recollection

THE CATHOLIC Women's League Philippines Inc. invites everyone to a special day of recollection with Abbot Thomas Keating, OCSO on Sunday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the UP Theatre, Diliman, Quezon City.

The theme of the day will center on "Deepening your Relationship with God through Prayer."

For tickets and other details, please call 524-3729/523-2956



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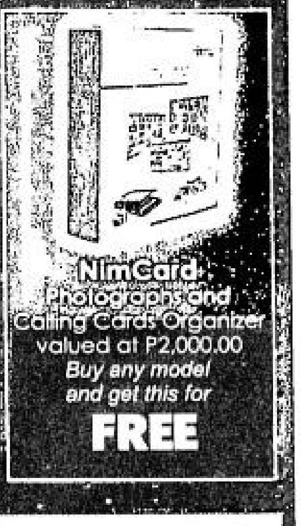

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P43.8 billion in the oil industry alone

VAT's PLUNDEROUS UNCONSTITUTIONALITY

By: Tet Garcia Jr, former Congressman now Incumbent Governor of the Province of Bataan

(From the Preface of Gov. Garcia's Petition filed in the Supreme Court today (20 July 2005) to nullify VAT)

If Congress simply provided for a 3% percentage tax on gross sales instead of the 10% VAT, only 3% can be passed on to and borne by the consuming public, all of which will go to government. After all, RA 9337, in providing for a 7% cap on VAT's input credits against its 10% output, clearly shows that Government is only interested in getting a 3% tax for this particular enhancement of revenues.

To illustrate and underline the extent of VAT's plunder, ***in the local downstream oil industry alone***, once the TRO on VAT is lifted, the per liter price of petroleum products will increase as follows: premium gasoline by P3.02 (from P30.20 to P33.22); unleaded by P2.96 (from P29.56 to P32.52); diesel by P2.80 (from P28.00 to P30.80); kerosene by P2.60 (from P26.00 to P28.60) and LPG P41.00/11kilogram (from P410.00 to P451.00)

Based on an estimated average selling price of petroleum products of P25.00 per liter and an estimated annual consumption of 25 billion liters, the price increase due to 10% VAT would amount to a whopping P62.5 billion per annum, P43.8 billion of which will ***not*** go to government but will nevertheless be passed on to and borne by our already suffering people. (A P0.01 per liter increase is equivalent to P250 million per year.)

COMPARATIVE TABLE -- 10% VAT vs 3% PERCENTAGE TAX

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
	pump prices as of 30-Jun-05	tax paid by consumers			governmet revenue	
		under 10% vat	under 3% percentage tax	tax reduction (c - d)	under 3% net vat	under 3% percentage tax
estimated annual volume (billion liters)	**25.0**	**25.0**	**25.0**	**25.0**	**25.0**	**25.0**
premium (P/ lliter)	30.20	3.02	0.91	**2.11**	0.91	0.91
unleaded (P/ liter)	29.56	2.96	0.89	**2.07**	0.89	0.89
diesel (P/ lliter)	28.00	2.80	0.84	**1.96**	0.84	0.84
kerosene (P/ lliter)	26.00	2.60	0.78	**1.82**	0.78	0.78
lpg (P/ 11 kg)	410.00	41.00	12.30	**28.70**	12.30	12.30
est. ave. price (P/ lliter)	25.00	2.50	0.75	**1.75**	0.75	0.75
total - (P billion per annum)	**625.0**	**62.5**	**18.8**	**43.8**	**18.8**	**18.8**

The table above shows, among other things, that the adoption of a 3% percentage tax on gross sales would reduce the per liter price increase under the 10% VAT as follows: premium - from P3.02 to P0.91; unleaded - from P2.96 to P0.89; diesel - from P2.80 to P0.84; kerosene - from P2.60 to P0.78 and LPG - from P41.00 to P12.30 (per 11 kg). All in all, in absolute amount, said reduction ***in the local downstream oil industry alone*** is equivalent to P43.8 billion per annum! Why could we not spare our people from this unnecessary hardship? Why must we succumb to foreign dictates instead of upholding what is good for us? Why do we insist on VAT when it is injurious to us? Terrible!

In short, while the revenue take of the government is the same at 3% under both tax systems - at P18.75 billion per annum - the tax passed on to and borne by our people under the 10% VAT is P62.5 billion, or P43.8 billion more. The local oil companies and their dealers would retain said amount (P43.8 billion) which is equivalent to the 7% input VAT credits.

Considering that all this pertains to the ***local downstream oil industry alone***, it is estimated that the total magnitude of anomaly, plunder and iniquity of VAT will be more than P300 billion pesos annually, now that it covers almost the entire range of sales of goods and services.

Unfortunately, in sharp and scandalous contrast, our legislators decided to continue with the IMF-prescribed VAT and to expand it further through RA 9337. The VAT system, through the output/input tax credit scheme: 1) provides for a 10% output VAT; 2) allows VAT-covered establishments to remit only 3% to Government; 3) allows them to make their 7% input tax credits part and parcel of their costs and profits, thus allowing them to ultimately keep the said 7% as additional profits; 4) imposes on the consumers the heavy 10% tax burden without regard to their ability to pay and the essentiality of products and services, practically all of which are now covered with the passage of RA 9337 (the latest E-VAT).

VAT and E-VAT (including the latest RA 9337) do not constitute a mere judgment call of Congress. Such judgment call plainly and clearly contravenes the constitutional imperatives on taxation. The unabashed unconstitutionality of VAT is magnified many times over because it acutely adds to the impoverishment of an already marginalized people, and thus exacerbates the crisis threatening the very survival of Constitutional Government today.

This petition therefore seeks to declare as unconstitutional the laws on Value Added Tax (VAT) which first took effect on 1 January 1988 by virtue of Executive Order No. 273 dated 25 July 1987, and expanded (E-VAT) several times through legislation, the latest being RA 9337. It covers sales, barters or exchanges of goods and other properties, importation, services, etc.

The laws on VAT are assailed as unconstitutional because it allows private VAT-covered establishments to immediately retain for themselves out of the 10% output VAT, the 7% through the input tax credits which they can incorporate into their prices and profits, at the expense of the public. As such VAT violates the constitutional precepts that taxes are burdens imposed as a means of providing public revenues for public purposes and are levied and collected ***"only upon the condition that they shall be devoted to such purposes; and no lawful tax can be laid for a different purpose"***. (Waples v. Marrast, 184 Southwestern Reporter 180, 182, emphasis ours).

Furthermore, the laws on VAT are unconstitutional on the ground that passing on the entire tax burden to the consuming public, regardless of their ability to pay, is inequitable, iniquitous and oppressive taxation. What is worse, is that 70% of what they pay goes to the pocket of VAT-covered establishments. This is plunder after plunder.

Incorporated under RA 9337, the latest expansion of VAT would now include, among others, mammoth industries like oil and power, thereby allowing them to join in unabashed plunder for private enrichment. Thus, the injury of the common masses is infinitely compounded.

The latest expansion of VAT under RA 9337 could not have come in the worst of all possible times. No one can deny that:

> Our country is groaning in the throes of national crises that threaten the very viability of our existence as a nation;
>
> The politics of our society is wracked by spasms of ambition and conflict;
>
> Our culture is being shaken to its foundations by intense issues of gambling, corruption and deceit;
>
> Our economy has been shamefully and sadly left behind by our Asian neighbors, limping and hobbling in subservient neglect of industry and lop-sided reliance on agriculture and trade;
>
> Even the military establishment, whether active or retired, is in grave danger of being splintered into warring factions;
>
> Looming large is the continuing impoverishment of the common masses who are increasingly weighed down by the incubus of discontent and despair, beset and burdened on all sides by joblessness, inadequate wages, escalation of costs of living, hunger, undernourishment, homelessness, unaffordable illnesses, so on and so forth ad nauseam;
>
> Foreign or so-called "global" interests present and even insist on "bitter pill" prescriptions that are out of touch with national realities and are even outside the ambit of constitutional commands. One of these is the IMF-pressured VAT system of taxation to which obsequious technocrats have given blind and tendentious hosannas and hurrahs; and
>
> Our local "technoquacks" have so far succeeded in convincing President after President and Congress after Congress to embrace misleading shibboleths of "liberalization", "free enterprise" and "deregulation" - which is proof par excellence of how our country and people have been misguided down the path of large-scale misdevelopment and misery.

How can there be true freedom of enterprise when political leaders are not free to take steps of national self-interest for crippling fear of "sending the wrong signals to foreign interests"? How can there be true liberalism when terms of finance and trade are onerous and unfair? How can there be true deregulation when monopolies and oligopolies and cartels dictate and impose scandalous overprices upon hapless people and helpless government?

How can there be respect for law and justice when statutes are passed and approved one after the other in cynical and callous violation of our Constitution?

How can we just turn our heads and pretend comfortable obliviousness to the inerasable reality that the VAT system of taxation contravenes the constitutional concept and purpose of taxation, enriches private establishments with public money, and oppresses the common people with more undeserved suffering?

In these crises-laden times, many concerned and conscientious citizens have come forward with extraordinary solutions to extraordinary problems. Thus, the demands for outright debt repudiation, the pleas for exchange and import controls, the calls for resignations, for still another "people power", for military coups and junta, for thoroughgoing overhaul of society and government, even for heads to roll ala guillotine.

Yet by one bold stroke of righteous and timely adjudication, the Supreme Court itself can send a ringing and inspiring message to leaders and masses alike that there can still be a restoration and re-affirmation of the Rule of Constitution and Law. In fact, the Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) issued by this Court to stop the implementation of E-VAT is a step in the right direction. Indeed, VAT should never be implemented at all. This is what our Constitution demands. This is what the clamoring people urgently want.

In one bold stroke the Supreme Court can overturn the whole VAT system of taxation as the monstrously unconstitutional statute that it is.

The Supreme Court would thereby signal a propitious return to legal fidelity and stability which, in turn, could present any Administration the opportunity to commence and pursue the process for attaining the true peace, stability and progress that have eluded this country for seemingly endless decades.

ADVT

FPJ won, says John O

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

A LOSING senatorial candidate from President Macapagal-Arroyo's K4 coalition yesterday said the real winner in the 2004 presidential election was the late Fernando Poe Jr.

Former Sen. John Osmeña held a press conference yesterday to expose what he said was the padding of votes in at least 10 regions, including the province of Cebu where Ms Arroyo won over her closest rival by more than one million votes.

"This is my first press conference since the election and I would like to use this opportunity to state something that I have always thought about in the last year and a half and that is – that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo lost the 2004 elections because in my opinion the winner in that election by about 700,000 votes was Fernando Poe Jr.," Osmeña said in a press conference at Westin Hotel.

"In Cebu where she makes such a big fuss over her 1,185,000 vote majority I am certain and the facts will support me when they are finally unearthed that she padded the election returns in Cebu by 460,000 votes and she only got 621,000 majority," Osmeña said.

The ex-senator from Cebu was among the 12 senatorial candidates of K4. He landed 15th and is now contesting the election of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon before the Senate Electoral Tribunal.

Osmeña said he accidentally discovered the padding of Ms Arroyo's votes when he asked a private research group to study the COCs (certificates of canvass) in areas where he was "deprived of votes" for his pending electoral protest before the Senate Electoral Protest.

Osmeña said the group examined the COCs used in the congressional canvass.

"They identified the areas where there was padding of votes for President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, they identified the areas where the canvass that was undertaken gave (her) more votes than she actually got," Osmeña said.

He identified the areas as the CAR, Pampanga and Tarlac in Central Luzon, Western Visayas, Central Visayas, Camarines Sur, Albay and Masbate, Region 8 except Northern Samar and Leyte, Zamboanga del Norte and del Sur, Sultan Kudarat, Caraga and the ARMM. He said these were the areas which he had asked for a recount of votes for his SET protest.

He gave reporters a report titled "Oplan Satellite 2004" which identified the provinces where Ms Arroyo were said to have padded her votes.

Thus, Osmeña said the 700,000-vote lead of Poe was just a "very rough estimate" based on the examination of the COCs from the provinces included in those regions.

Wanted cop tagged as man on Erap tape

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE BROTHER of murdered Young Officers Union spokesperson Baron Cervantes yesterday pointed to police Supt. Rafael Cardeno as the unidentified hitman talking with deposed President Joseph Estrada in the controversial "X-tape."

"The voice which I clearly recall is the voice of Cardeno, the murderer of my brother, who remains at large," Lloyd Cervantes said in a press conference at the National Press Club in Manila yesterday.

Cervantes said he was visiting Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) founding chair Dante Jimenez last Friday when he heard the press conference of former Ilocos Sur governor Luis "Chavit" Singson on television.

When Singson played the alleged "Erapgate" compact disc, Cervantes said he recognized the voice the former president was talking to on the other line.

"I would recognize that voice anywhere," Cervantes said, stressing that as the victim's brother, he had taken note of Cardeno's unusual voice when the police official was being interviewed on television a few years ago.

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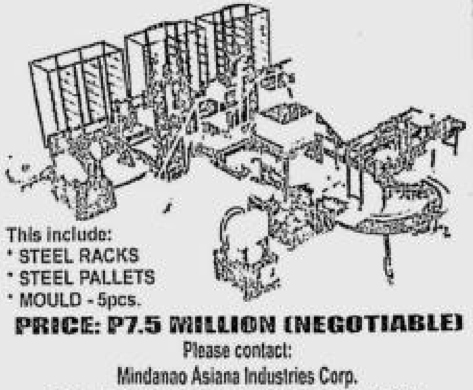
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Thousands protest Gaza pullout plan

KFAR MAIMON, Israel—Tens of thousands of opponents of the Israeli government's plan to pull out of the Gaza Strip were being held back from marching on the territory by a mass of police and soldiers Tuesday.

With the police placed on a maximum state of alert for the first time since the start of the war in Iraq more than two years ago, security forces were under strict instructions to prevent protestors from reaching the Kissufim border crossing and forcing their way into the Jewish settlements.

The mass protest represents one of the last shows of strength by opponents of next month's pullout from Gaza and four small West Bank settlements, a plan which has overcome all parliamentary and legal hurdles.

Public access to the 21 Gaza settlements was sealed off last week, infuriating the organizers of the mass protest and leading to accusations that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was acting like a dictator.

Organizers of the protest estimated that around 50,000 supporters had assembled at the small town of Kfar Maimon overnight ahead of a march on Kissufim although police at the scene put the number at no more than 20,000.

Most of the protestors spent the night camped out in a giant car park, where the atmosphere was largely jovial.

The red alert status, however, reflected fears that events could spiral out of control. At one point, dozens of settlers surrounded several border police jeeps and urged the occupants to refuse to obey orders.

They danced around the vehicles and tied orange ribbons to them, the color that has come to symbolize the campaign against the evacuation from Gaza.

Gideon Ezra, the minister for internal security, said there was no question of reversing the decision not to allow the protestors into Gaza.

"The issue that most concerns us, is that we see to it that no one will reach (the main Gaza settlement bloc) Gush Katif. That is the goal," he told army radio.

Pinhas Wallerstein, one of the main settler leaders, countered that the authorities would not be able to prevent people from entering the territory.

His views were echoed by those gathered in Kfar Maimon.

"We will fight for our liberties. It is unthinkable that we should give up Gush Katif without anything in return," said Rebecca, an American-born Israeli.

"It is absurd to give the army this evacuation role when it is supposed to be defending the country against the enemy," she said.

The ultra-nationalist MP, Uri Ariel, filed a petition at the supreme court to protest the decision to deploy soldiers as well as police in the stand-off with the demonstrators at Kfar Maimon.

"This is an intolerable scandal. Sharon is panicking, and has set up martial law here," said Ariel. *AFP*

Iraq rebels attack anew; 15 killed

BAGHDAD—Thirteen Iraqi workers were killed in a bus ambush on Tuesday as insurgent attacks showed no sign of a let-up while President Jalal Talabani signaled that a new constitution could be ready ahead of time.

A total of 15 people were killed in attacks by rebels, including the 13 slain when insurgents opened fire on a bus carrying workers to a US army base outside Baquba, a restive town northeast of Baghdad.

Insurgents have stepped up their attacks in the last few weeks, with more than 140 killed and scores other wounded in a bombing frenzy in the last five days alone.

Talabani, the first Kurdish head of state in an Arab country, said the drafting of the new constitution was almost finalized and the document could be ready by the end of July, ahead of the Aug. 15 deadline.

In the deadliest attack on Tuesday, 10 workers were killed when their bus came under heavy gunfire from attackers near Baquba, an interior ministry official said. Another three civilians died when the bus driver lost control of his vehicle and crashed into a passing car.

Another two people were killed and four others wounded when a Iraqi police patrol was hit by a roadside bomb in the northern oil center of Kirkuk, police said.

One of the dead was a policeman, while the other was a member of Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

The deadliest attack of recent days was on Saturday in the town of Al-Musayyib south of Baghdad when a suicide bomber blew up a fuel tanker killing 83 people and wounding 151.

US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chair General Richard Myers warned of more bloodshed as Iraq prepares for elections later this year.

"Clearly, there is going to be more violence ahead because there are people who don't want progress to happen," he said.

Retired US general Barry McCaffrey, meanwhile, told the Senate foreign relations committee that rebel attacks would peak in six months and US troops could begin withdrawing in a year.

Against the bloody backdrop, a donors' meeting on the shores of the Dead Sea in Jordan saw the World Bank promise $500 million loan to Iraq, its first since 1973. *AFP*

Pakistan captures 5 Taliban leaders

PESHAWAR—Pakistani intelligence agents have arrested five senior Taliban leaders, including a deputy to fugitive Taliban chief Mullah Mohammed Omar, two security officials said.

The arrests were made on Monday after security agents raided several homes in northwestern Pakistan, said the most senior of the two intelligence officials, who was involved in interrogating the suspects. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to speak to reporters.

The officials identified two of the captured men as Maulvi Abdul Qadeer, a deputy to Omar and formerly chair of the Taliban Special Council, and Abdul Kabir, a former governor in Afghanistan's Nangarhar province.

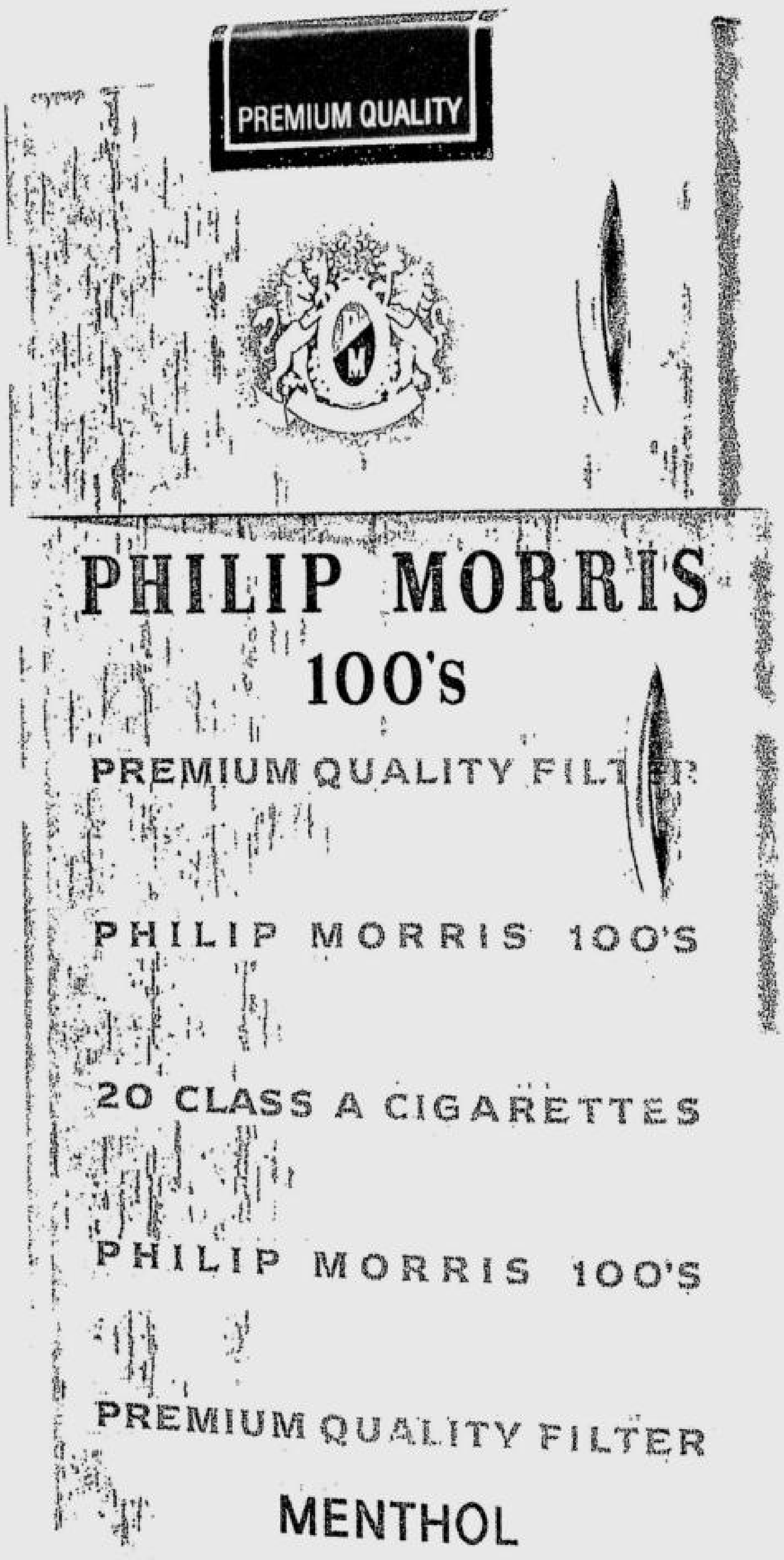
They would not disclose the names of the remaining three leaders, but one official said "they are also important Taliban leaders who are in our custody and being interrogated in Pakistan."

No government officials were available to confirm the arrests.

Pakistan, a key ally in the US-led war on terror, has arrested more than 700 Taliban and al-Qaida members, including high level operatives, since the hard-line Taliban was ousted from power in Afghanistan in 2001 for sheltering Osama bin Laden.

Bin Laden and Omar have so far eluded capture, but US and Afghan officials believe they are hiding out in Pakistan's rugged tribal belt on the border with Afghanistan.

Pakistan has deployed more than 70,000 troops to this region to flush out remnants of the Taliban and al-Qaida. *AP*



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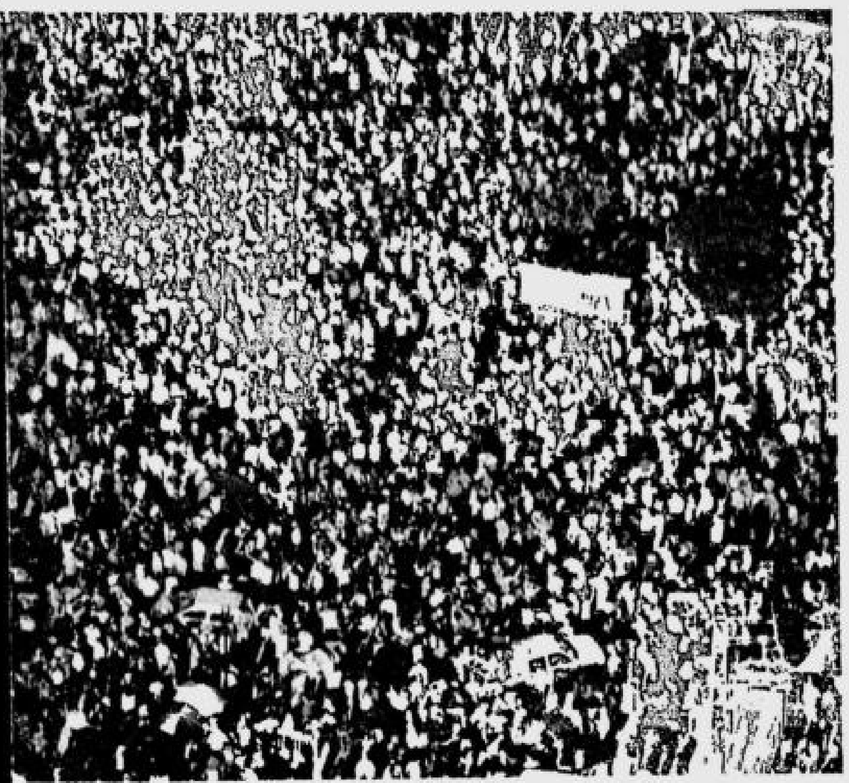

his aerial photo, thousands of Israeli supporters of the Jewish settlements vement gather during a demonstration near Netivot, southern Israel, July 18. AP

Britain to pass new antiterror law

LONDON—Britain's interior minister moved a step closer Monday to passing tough new antiterrorism laws by December after he won "broad support" from the opposition parties in the wake of the London bombings.

The news came as the death toll from the country's worst terror attack rose by one to 56, and as a report linked Britain's support of the Iraq war to the July 7 atrocity, turning up the heat on Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Home Secretary Charles Clarke said he and his counterparts in the main opposition Conservative and smaller Liberal Democrat parties agreed in principle to cooperate on the draft legislation following hour-long talks.

"We believe that is the right way to go and we believe that it will enable us to address the threat we face with a unity and determination which is critical," Clarke, flanked by David Davis of the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats' Mark Oaten, told reporters.

The bill is expected to be put before lawmakers in October when parliament reopens after its summer recess and become law by December.

The interior minister wrote to opposition parties Friday outlining plans for the bill that would outlaw the indirect incitement of terrorism, for example preachers who praise suicide bombers or describe them as martyrs.

Tougher new laws seem likely to win widespread support among a public still reeling from the twin shock of the suicide bombings coupled with the discovery the attackers were home grown.

Asked how confident he was that the bill would survive parliamentary scrutiny, Clarke said: "Very confident. The broad support for where we are is very strong." He also said that the government was ready to consider even tighter legislation if the security services deem such a move desirable, but he noted that police for the time being were concentrating on unraveling the London bombings.

Away from the legislative debate, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, known as Chatham House, concluded in a report that the war in Iraq gave a "boost" to al-Qaida and made Britain especially vulnerable to attacks—a theory contrary to Blair's belief that there is no link with the bombings.

"There is no doubt that the situation over Iraq has imposed particular difficulties for the UK, and for the wider coalition against terrorism," said the London-based research center in its study, "Riding Pillion for Tackling Terrorism is a High-risk Policy."

Foreign Secretary Jack Straw however denied the allegation that London's part in the US-led, March 2003 invasion made it more vulnerable. "I'm astonished that Chatham House is now saying that we should not have stood shoulder to shoulder with our long-standing allies in the United States," Straw said on arrival at a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels.

Chatham House also heavily criticized the British government's antiterrorism strategy, accusing it of working shoulder-to-shoulder with the US as a back seat passenger rather than an equal decision maker.

To this charge, Blair's official spokesperson said both London and Washington simply had the same priorities in the fight against terrorism.

Meanwhile, the massive police investigation into the blasts on three London Underground trains and a bus rumbled on. *AFP*

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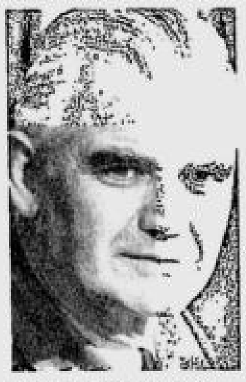
Vietnam war vet Westmoreland dies at 91

WASHINGTON—Gen. William Westmoreland, the highly decorated former commander of US forces in Vietnam whose name became synonymous with the US military debacle in Southeast Asia, died late Monday at a retirement home in Charleston, South Carolina. He was 91.

Westmoreland, a veteran of three wars and recipient of three dozen military decorations during his career, commanded US forces in Vietnam from 1964-68, a critical period in the conflict.



WESTMORELAND

Chief architect of the "war of attrition" strategy, he came home from Southeast Asia to find himself identified with macabre body counts and seemingly endless requests for more US troops.

He maintained in decades following the US withdrawal from Vietnam in 1975 that the war had not been a failure and that history would vindicate the US military involvement there; he blamed the war's worst follies on President Lyndon Johnson, charging in his memoir "War in Vain?" that the Democratic president—insecure and too eager to please—refused to make the tough choices Westmoreland advocated.

In that memoir, Westmoreland lashed out at critics and blamed the ultimate US and South Vietnamese military defeat on "politicians and policymakers" in Washington "who forced us to fight with one hand." The four-star general said the conflict might have ended in a US victory had Johnson not "listened to too much-faulty advice" and ignored his plan to step up bombing of North Vietnam and invade Cambodia and Laos.

"Washington timidity was an outgrowth of the advice of well-intentioned but naïve officials and of its effects on a president so politically oriented that he tried to please everybody rather than bite the bullet and make the hard decisions," Westmoreland wrote.

He ruled out a full land invasion. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Al-Qaida suspect freed

KARLSRUHE, Germany—A suspected al-Qaida financier was freed from jail in Germany on Monday after the country's highest court blocked his extradition to Spain, dealing a new blow to German antiterror efforts. The federal constitutional court ruled that handing over Syrian-German businessman Mamoun Darkazanli to Spain on a new EU arrest warrant would violate Germany's basic law. Darkazanli, 46, was released from custody in Hamburg a few hours later and climbed into a taxi without commenting. Spain accuses him of being Osama bin Laden's "permanent interlocutor and assistant" in Europe and having provided the al-Qaida network with logistical and financial support between 1997 and 2002." *AFP*

China evacuates 600,000

TAIPEI—China evacuated over 600,000 people from coastal areas on Monday after typhoon Haitang slammed into Taiwan, killing up to four people, injuring 25 and forcing offices, schools and markets to shut across the island. At 1300 GMT, Haitang was packing maximum winds of 144 km/h (89 mph), down from a previous 184 km/h, and gusts of up to 180 km/h, weaker than the earlier 227 km/h, said Taiwan's Central Weather Bureau. If the typhoon stays on its present course, it will hit China's southeastern coast on Tuesday afternoon. "Based on our current forecast data, it should make landfall in mainland China around 2 p.m. local time," said Daniel Wu, director of the bureau's forecasting centers. *Reuters*

US bomber gets life term

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.—Insisting that he had "kept the faith," convicted Olympic bomber Eric Rudolph was sentenced to life in prison without parole on Monday for the 1998 bombing of an Alabama abortion clinic that killed a police officer and maimed a nurse. The 38-year-old abortion foe, who evaded capture by federal agents for five years, stood defiant in a federal court in Birmingham, Alabama, as US District Judge Lynwood Smith sentenced him to two consecutive life terms without parole for bombing the New Woman All Women clinic in the city. "As I go to a prison cell for a lifetime, I know I have fought the good fight," Rudolph, clad in a dark orange prison suit, told the court. "I have kept the faith." *Reuters*

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OPINION

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EDITORIALS

Get it right

THIS week, by its own admission, marks a make-or-break period for the political opposition in crafting credible articles of impeachment. It also marks a period of preparation for the majority coalition in Congress to determine in what manner it will handle the charges. After trying to impeach Presidents Quirino, Macapagal and Marcos, more generous rules in the present Constitution finally made the trial of Joseph Estrada in the Senate possible. However that exercise was, at best, half-baked.

This time around, no side can claim ignorance. There are clear lessons from the past impeachment effort. On the part of the House of Representatives, the lessons are that ad hoc charges are not the way to go, and that the prosecution cannot afford to appear bumbling and amateurish. On the part of the Senate and the defense, the profoundly political nature of impeachment came as a shock to both defense lawyers and the senators, unaccustomed to their more serious role as jurors (in a country that doesn't have a jury system except for impeachment), and more interested in being judges, in an exercise in which the entire nation decided to be jurors, too. The biggest demonstration of the flawed understanding our senators possessed at the time, was the question of the second envelope.

The senators were keener on being judges rather than jurors. Instead of referring the matter to the only active judge among them, Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., they decided to brazen out the question as a matter of political muscle. The disastrous consequences showed that the senators who triumphed on a minor point possessed a lack of understanding of the fine balance between fair play and politics required of them at the time. It was short-sighted law, and self-defeating politics.

In no small part due to the diminished intellectual caliber of the present Senate, its handling of an impeachment trial could lead to a more pleasant silence on the part of many of them, or even more vicious snarling and glaring. The fear of public revulsion is being put forward as an argument for expecting sobriety from our senators. We wonder how such an expectation can be put forward after seeing the recent Senate hearings on *jueteng*.

The overwhelming majority, we believe, have demonstrated a preference for constitutionally ordained procedures to prevail. There can be no finer demonstration of how deeply Filipinos have imbibed the democratic way of life. The problem is that in a political culture where self-restraint is a vanishing virtue, our elected representatives from both Houses of Congress aren't exactly known for understanding the term. And yet, despite all the skepticism and criticism they regularly face, an impeachment is really our representatives' finest moment: an entire society trusts them to do what is right, in the right way, despite every reason to assume the contrary.

And so we remind Congress: Even knaves can be heroes. Let us see heroes, for once.

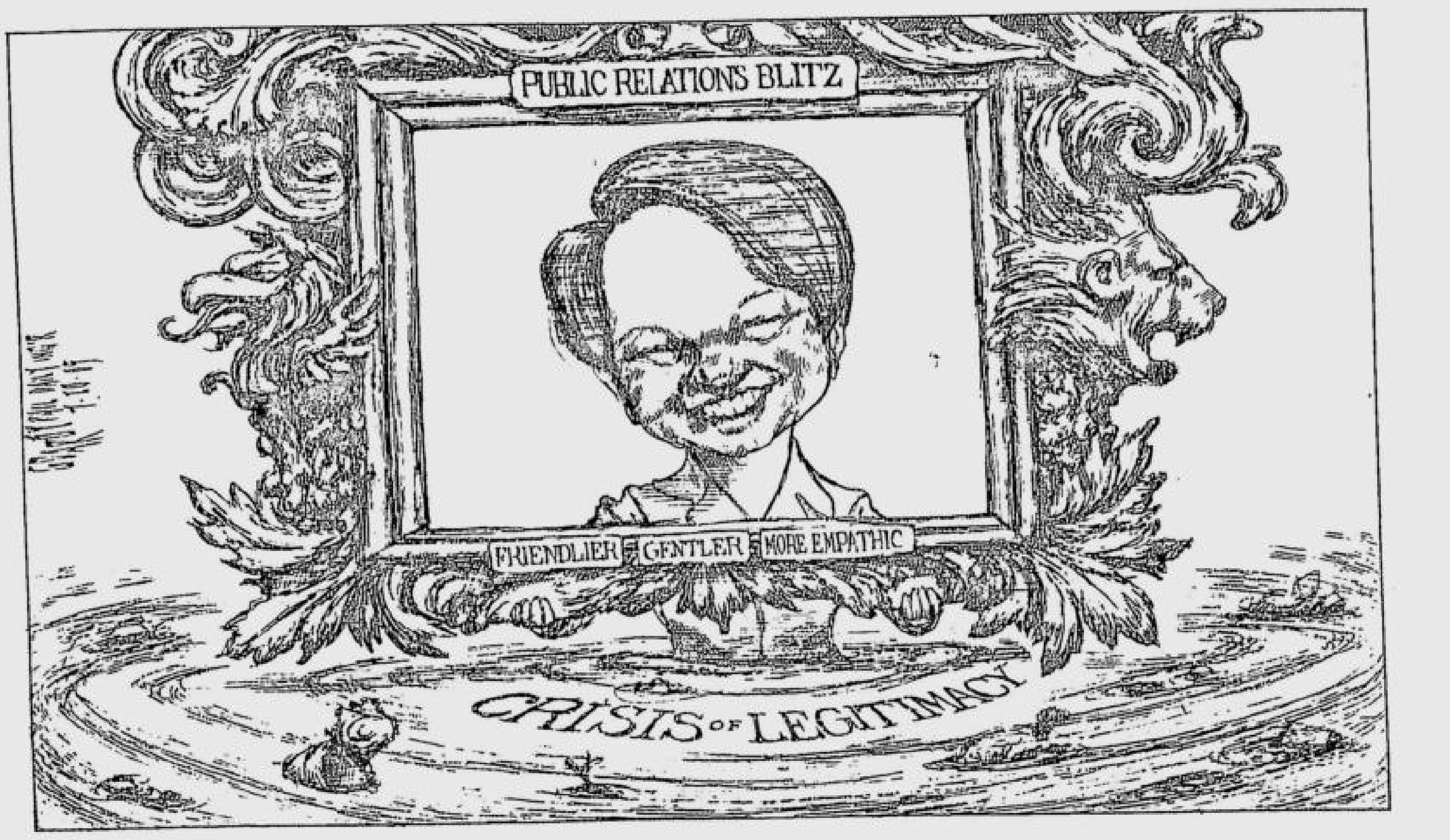
Gambit

YESTERDAY the President suddenly sent a letter to the bishops, saying she was open to having some sort of fact-finding commission. This, after she already set up the entire political establishment to fight it out in an impeachment.

So what will it be? Does the President suspect she cannot successfully fend off an impeachment, so now, she wants to buy time by creating a commission whose mandate is not clearly spelled out, and whose composition is still up in the air? The sincerity of this letter is beside the point; for it has introduced instability into a situation that was, only now, showing signs of a predictable method for resolving it.

The commission idea was floated as a means to stave off a worsening crisis. However, the crisis is here, and not least because of the President's refusal to take an active part in clearing her name through such a body. When she herself managed to control the situation by arguing for impeachment, here she comes now piously pleading for a commission. Where was she when the idea made the most sense?

Now the country faces the possibility of two bodies—the Senate and a yet-to-be constituted body—determining the same things. Divide and conquer?



The best, fastest way to end the crisis

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

THERE is a better way than resignation, impeachment or a Truth Commission to end the current crisis gripping the nation. Resignation under pressure may be unfair to the President. Impeachment is not decided on the basis of truth and justice but by politics. And a Truth Commission, no matter who its members are, may not be credible to all, besides being slow, tedious and expensive.

For example, if the commission finds President Macapagal-Arroyo innocent of cheating, there will be people, especially the opposition, who will cry "*lutong macao.*" Its findings will not end the crisis. On the contrary, they will exacerbate it, in the same way that the proclamation of GMA by a partisan Congress only made the crisis worse because of charges of "*lutong macao.*"

The best, fastest, and most accurate way I have already stated twice before, but I will say it again: recount the election returns for the presidential candidates. The Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET) will open the election returns for vice-presidential candidates because of the poll protest of opposition bet Loren Legarda against Vice President Noli de Castro. On the same electoral returns are written the votes for the presidential candidates. It would take no more than a few seconds to look at the votes of the top two candidates and tally them.

This is what a Truth Commission will ultimately do, anyway, except that the PET, being composed of Supreme Court justices, will be more credible. Besides, the latter would be faster and cheaper. A Truth Commission will have to hire a staff and rent and equip an office. Congress will have to pass a law creating the commission to give it legal authority—and you know how slow Congress is. The PET is already there with a functioning office and staff and the P5 million paid by Legarda.

Legarda and Presidential Adviser for Political Affairs Gabby Claudio and Cabinet Secretary Ricardo Saludo were the guests at last Monday's Kapihan sa Manila and I asked them if the proposal was acceptable to them. They had no objections—if PET rules will allow it.

I don't see why not, if both sides, GMA and the opposition, will join in a petition to the PET to recount the electoral returns in order to end the national crisis. The opposition has been clamoring for that since the canvassing of the votes by Congress. And if GMA did not cheat as she claims, she should be eager to erase any doubt to her legitimacy.

There will be lawyers who will argue that it cannot be done because of technicalities. But there is a legal principle that says technicality is subservient to substance. It is in the public interest that suspicions of cheating be erased and end the crisis. Technicality should be subservient to that.

Besides, the PET is composed of justices of the Supreme Court, which is the ultimate interpreter of laws and maker of rules. If it can make rules, it can also unmake them. The Court has many times changed rules and decisions in the interest of justice. I don't see why it cannot do the same thing to solve the stalemate that is ripping the nation apart.

I know the PET has already dismissed the petition of Susan Roces to substitute for her dead husband, Fernando Poe Jr., in his election protest against GMA. But in many previous decisions by the Supreme Court on election protests where one of the parties died, the ruling was made on the appreciation that an election protest is imbued with public interest and is not extinguished when one of the parties dies. In De Castro vs. Commission on Elections, the Court ruled: "The death of the protestant, as in this case, neither constitutes a ground for the dismissal of the contest nor ousts the trial court of its jurisdiction to decide the election contest."

In its 1997 decision, the Court said that "determination of what candidate has in fact been elected is a matter clothed with public interest, wherefore public policy demands that an election contest, duly commenced, be not abated by the death of the contestant... It is true that a public office is personal to the public officer and is not a property transmissible to his heirs upon death. But...an election protest is not purely personal and exclusive to the protestant or to the protestee such that the death of either would oust the court of all authority to continue the protest proceedings.

"An election contest, after all, involves not merely conflicting private aspirations but is imbued with paramount public interests. As we have held in the case of Vda. De Mesa v. Mencias:

"xxx. It is axiomatic that an election contest, involving as it does not only the adjudication and settlement of the private interests of the rival candidates but also the paramount need of dispelling once and for all the uncertainty that beclouds the real choice of the electorate with respect to who shall discharge the prerogatives of the offices within their gift, is a proceeding imbued with public interest which raises it into a plane over and above ordinary civil actions. For this reason, broad perspectives of public policy impose upon courts the imperative duty to ascertain by all means within their command who is the real candidate elected in as expeditious a manner as possible, without being fettered by technicalities and procedural barriers to the end that the will of the people may not be frustrated."

Isn't it strange that in the case of FPJ's protest, the Court seems to have forgotten its own earlier decisions?

The truth isn't out there

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

I WAS struck by two items in the newspaper the other day. The first one said the progressive bishops, or those who were actively espousing GMA's resignation, were much influenced by Pope Benedict XVI's injunction for them to desist from political activity. His message apparently was transmitted by Apostolic Nuncio Antonio Franco who said, "What Rome wants is for the clergy not to get involved in direct political action. When a bishop, a priest, or religious stands openly on political issues, we are reminded that it's not our role."

The second item said the bishops favored the forming of a Truth Commission to determine if GMA really cheated in the elections to be followed by an impeachment if that is warranted. "The Truth Commission will lay the groundwork for an impeachment process," Archbishop Hernando Coronel, CBCP secretary-general, said. The CBCP itself had earlier called for an "independent process to examine the authenticity of the so-called Garcillano tapes, verify any possible betrayal of public trust, and mete out due punishment on all those found guilty."

Either the bishops have been possessed by the Holy Spirit they are speaking obscurely in tongues of fire or they have been seized by the spirit of the residents of Babel they are speaking incoherently. I myself have no problems picking the second.

To begin with, Joseph Ratzinger, aka Benedict XVI, former Nazi Youth, is not the best person to be giving clergy advice on not interfering in politics. Truly, what a steep plunge it's been from Pope John Paul II to this one. The previous Pope stood out heads and shoulders above the pack, secular and religious leaders alike, for one thing, which was that he was big on morality. Morality not just in the religious sense but in all the senses of the word. One monumental sense of it being fighting what was patently politically evil, such as George W. Bush invading Iraq, which he condemned to its very roots.

Some things are inherently writ with questions of good and evil in their every pore. The US invasion of Iraq is one of them. GMA cheating in the last elections is another. These are things we are compelled to confront whether we are clergy or lay, whether we are religious or secular, whether we are priests or prostitutes. To not do so is to deny our divine spark as beings invested with the power to weigh right and wrong, good and evil. Worse, to not do so is to make the evil rife.

For the bishops to have attacked the problem of whether to have Noli or Fili, a transitional government or a revolutionary council, after GMA, that would have been to indulge in politics. For the bishops to have attacked the problem of whether GMA should rule or not, that is to affirm a moral principle. It is only secondarily an issue that also involves governance. It is primarily an issue that involves right or wrong. That issue is: Does any candidate have a right to cheat in elections?

Like I said in response to Jose Concepcion's own endorsement of a Truth Commission, what is a Truth Commission supposed to ferret out? To repeat, I'm all for a Truth Commission myself if it will ferret out the truth about the extent of Namfrel's collusion with the Comelec to defraud the voters. Or if it will investigate how Code-NGO, which also wants a Truth Commission, managed to corner the Peace Bonds worth P1.4 billion. Those are the only things left worth knowing. The truth about the "Hello, Garci" tapes GMA has already yielded, albeit grudgingly: She confessed to it. We know it is her on the tapes. We know she talked to Garcillano during the counting. We know what they talked about. What else do we want from an "independent body"?

The whole idea of a Truth Commission that will investigate whether GMA did wrong or not is not unlike a comedy routine where a husband is discovered by his wife in bed with another woman and this conversation takes place: Wife: "Get out of this house this instant!" Husband: "I can explain, this is not how it looks." Wife: "So what is she doing here?" Husband: "I brought her home because it was dark and raining and some harm might come to her outside." Wife: "Why is she naked?" Husband: "Because her clothes were soaked with rain and I took them out to dry." Wife: "Why were you naked beside her?" Husband: "Because she was shivering from the cold and I was keeping her warm by rubbing my naked body against hers." Wife: "Why were you both moaning and groaning?" Husband: "That was the wind and rain, it was doctoring your hearing."

At this point, the husband's father comes in and says the best thing to do would be to gather the barangay council to find out the truth about the matter. At this point also, the husband is berating his wife (while putting on his pants) for harboring malicious thoughts. And the wife is muttering to her husband (while the other woman is slinking away into the night), "Sorry, sorry, I distrusted you dear."

Part for part that is the exact parallel of the Hello, Garci episode and the ensuing calls for a Truth Commission. Even the last part: At the end of a Truth Commission, we are all bound to say sorry to GMA for distrusting her. This whole deal is that insanely funny.

Who in God's name (which isn't Benedict) wants the bishops to meddle in politics? Who wants the bishops to say who should govern this country and what his or cardinal virtues should be? All we want is for them to see right and wrong. They cannot see when a monumental wrong has been done, they have no right to lead their flock, they are more lost than them. The bishops cannot see a truth when it stares them in the face, they have no right to be bishops, they should be in PR.

Truth Commission? The truth isn't out there, it's just plain out.

Confession of weakness

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE STATEMENT last July 10 of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines is a carefully crafted and delicately balanced document that put the Catholic Church in the Philippines at the fulcrum of contending demands arising from the current political turmoil.

The bishops' stand and pastoral role in crisis is spelled out in Paragraph 7 which says: "We declare our prayerfully discerned collective decision that we do not demand her resignation." They balanced this with the statement that said, "Yet, neither do we encourage her simply to dismiss such a call from others."

This statement steered the Church clear of what the bishops called "the welter of conflicting opinions and positions." It said the bishops' role "is not to point out a specific political option or a package of options as the Gospel choice, especially so when an option might be grounded merely on an speculative and highly controvertible basis." It added that "in the present situation, we believe that no single concrete option regarding President Macapagal-Arroyo can claim to be the only one demanded by the Gospel."

In spurning the calls for resignation, the bishops did not yield to the passion from the streets lusting for the head of the President, on the basis of conversations in the tapes purporting to show that she allegedly cheated in the 2004 elections. This statement urges a cautionary approach to the contents of the tapes that have fueled the resignation demand—an option that "might be grounded merely on speculative and highly controvertible basis." Unlike the herd that has taken to the streets, after making rash judgements on the basis of evidence provided by the tapes, the bishops preferred to take a more prudent course.

As subsequent developments show, the bishops' middle-ground statement has, in effect, calmed the hysteria in the streets from developing into a lynching or a witch-hunt not unlike the one launched in the United States by Joseph McCarthy that smeared many people, including intellectuals as "communists and fellow-travellers" on the basis of hearsay evidence collected by the overzealous anti-communist agents of J. Edgar Hoover's Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Thus, we have today a clamor for decapitation of a regime on the basis of controvertible evidence mounted by elements in society who have appointed themselves the moral guardians of political rectitude with nothing more solid to buttress their action than their own conclusion that crimes against the Constitution have been committed, even before the side of those they accuse of breaching the Constitution has been heard.

It is a cardinal principle of fairness and justice, under the rule of law, that before any one is sent to the gallows the person charged with breaking the law has a right to be heard and to defend himself or herself, and that a bill of particulars has to be presented. In the furor over the tapes, the public has not been given the benefit of specifying particular acts that are impeachable.

Is talking to an election commissioner an impeachable act? If so, those raising self-righteous umbrage over it must show what specifically is the illegal act that breached the Constitution.

Before it can reasonably be concluded that an illegal act has been committed, it has to be shown that the Comelec official was instructed to change the election results. One hopes this specification will take place in the impeachment trial, a course to which the crisis is heading.

Further, it has to be shown that the conversations, perceived by some as implicit instructions to cheat, translated into changing of the vote and where. For anyone to make a case that there was "massive" cheating and the election was "stolen," more substantial, rather than circumstantial, evidence is needed to prove that cheating was indeed of such a scale that could have significantly changed the outcome.

Before anyone can make a moral judgment of right or wrong on a pubic issue, it has to be shown the person accused has broken the law. Unless this is established, no one has the right make a moral judgment of wrongdoing in public office or loss of moral ascendancy.

As an average person without any inclination to claim a superior standard of probity, we are as outraged as the next citizen over election cheating and corruption in public office. But we are afraid of and repelled by the notion that discards evidence as the foundation of justice and fair play. We are afraid of mobs making moral judgements not built on established facts. Even in revolutionary France, the King, the Queen and several revolutionary leaders were tried in tribunals of the Committee of Pubic Safety before they mounted the scaffold to be guillotined.

The bishops saw these dangers when they decided to reject resignation as the mode of changing political leadership. They declared that while they "recognized non-violent appeals for her resignation," they also suggested that "the demand for a Truth Commission and the filing of an impeachment case are not against the Gospel."

Since the outbreak of this crisis, I have insisted and argued that the accusations against the President in an impeachment trial. It is the fairest forum that can shift the crisis from the streets.

Also I hate to be stampeded by unreason. In the streets, you have no chance to defend yourself from a lynch mob bent on flattening you with the steam roller of hysteria whipped up by the moral determinism and absolutism of sanctimonious groups.

The resignation demand is arbitrary and summary. Because of this, it is an implicit confession on the part of those rushing to the streets that they have a weak case.

Getting to know HPV

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

KOTA KINABALU—Let me introduce you to HPV, otherwise known as the human papilloma virus.

HPV is an "extremely common infection," says Dr. Xavier Bosch, chief of epidemiology of the Catalan Cancer Institute in Barcelona, who is one of the pioneering researchers in the world to establish the link between HPV infection and cervical cancer. "There is almost universal exposure (to HPV); any sexually active woman will encounter the virus sooner or later."

Actually, HPV is more a family or clan of viruses than a single virus. There are more than 100 types, and among these, several have been identified as "oncogenic" (cancer causing), though two types—16 and 18—are associated with about 70 percent of cervical cancer cases. Most people would be more familiar with HPV, though, as causing warts, which can be found in different parts of the body, including the genitals. Two other types of HPV have been identified as "immunogenic," that is, causing an immune reaction, and they figure prominently in current research and clinical trials being undertaken to develop a vaccine.

The HPV, which has been identified with 95 to 100 percent of all cervical cancer cases, is the "first necessary cause of human cancer discovered in the world," said Dr. Bosch. As such, knowing what causes it, having devised several tests to detect it, and now with a vaccine being developed that would, it is hoped, eradicate it, cervical cancer should be relatively easy to lick.

No woman need ever die from this disease. But as scientists, epidemiologists, medical specialists and public health authorities have attested, it is not the science behind cervical cancer that prevents the crafting of effective responses. Rather, it is the lack of awareness among the general public, and thus the indifference of health authorities, that prevents governments from saving the lives of hundreds of thousands of women around the world.

* * *

AT THE OPENING session of the "Inaugural Scientific Meeting" of the newly-organized Asia Oceania (research organization on) Genital Infections and Neoplasia or AOGIN, speakers quickly justified the need for such a regional organization.

Cervical cancer is the second most-common cancer in the world (after breast cancer), with Asia contributing "the vast majority of cervical cancer cases" globally. The reason for this is not just because Asia is host to China and India, but also because governments in Asia, with a few exceptions, have not established successful mass screening programs.

The adoption of massive and organized screening programs is the primary reason the rates of cervical cancer in the developed world have fallen sharply. In fact, in the developed world, the controversies now swirl around whether to adopt HPV DNA testing or the pap smear as the primary means of screening, and whether it would be "wise" to start screening women in their 20s (when most start becoming sexually active) when it's older women, past the age of 35, who are most vulnerable to cervical cancer.

* * *

THE REASON controversy exists is that, as stated earlier, HPV is an extremely common infection. And even if a young woman tests positive for HPV 16 or 18, her immune system has a good chance of getting rid of the infection. It's when HPV infection becomes "persistent," that is, recurring and difficult to eradicate, that the possibility of developing cervical cancer looms. This is why, from a public health standpoint, screening is recommended for older women.

Though HPV DNA tests (marketed by Digene, one of the sponsors of the conference) are available in the market, its main drawback is price—about P2,000 per test. In the developed world, the most common screening procedure adopted is the "pap smear," which involves taking a sample of tissue from a woman's cervix, then examining the sample under a microscope to look for "abnormal" cells. But even the "pap," which is available in private clinics for P400 and in public health centers for as low as P50, has proven to be too expensive for a mass screening program in developing countries, including the Philippines.

* * *

IN HER presentation, Dr. Genara Manuel-Limson presented the findings of a study on risk factors for cervical cancer in the country.

Factors for increased risk of cervical cancer were: early age of first intercourse, increasing number of sexual partners and high parity, or frequent pregnancies and births. A woman's risk is decreased when she has had a history of pap smears. Women with cervical cancer in the Philippines have a low survival rate, and the reason, said Dr. Limson, "is the fact that more than two-thirds of our cases are diagnosed late."

While the "pap smear" is the most cost-effective cancer screening method, said Dr. Limson, many factors—cost foremost among them but also the lack of trained professionals, especially lab personnel and pathologists, and inadequate health infrastructure—mandate against adopting the "pap" as the primary screening method in the Philippines.

Tasked with identifying "a new approach that is feasible, cost-effective and replicable," a panel headed by Dr. Limson recommended the adoption of "acetic acid aided visualization method," which relies on visually spotting precancerous lesions, as the initial screen test. Women who test positive are then referred to provincial or regional hospitals for colposcopy (which makes a closer examination of the cervix possible) or possible biopsy for a more exact diagnosis. Alas, a pilot program planned for Cebu a few years ago has yet to take off.

Filipino women remain just as, if not more, vulnerable to dying from cervical cancer as ever.

Little known details about an old story

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

YESTERDAY I addressed the Philippine Board of Books for Young People at the Cultural Center on the theme "Masarap Magbasa sa Kandungan ni Nanay." One did not need Einstein's brain to see that the theme was tailor-fit for a historian whose career was made on the life and works of Jose Rizal. Naturally, the audience expected the retelling of the story of the moth and the flame that we all know so well. This was a recipe for sleep, so I was tempted to give the theme some zest by embarking on a Freudian take and perverting *kandungan ni nanay* into a keynote lecture on Rizal and his Oedipus complex. Now that twist would surely have roused the crowd to attention, but PBBY was not the proper forum for an exploration into Rizal's inner fears and desires.

Revisiting Rizal's own version of this all too familiar story, however, revealed some details that are often overlooked. While the moth and the flame is a story all Filipinos know quite well, it is usually retold by someone else rather than through the eyes of our hero-to-be, Jose Rizal, in his juvenile diary. One night in the late 1860s, Rizal was sitting with his mother by a table dimly lit by a coconut oil lamp. She was teaching him to read from a book in Spanish, entitled "El Amigo de los Ninos" (The Children's Friend). The book was old and tattered from use. No doubt Lolay (as Teodora Alonso was called) had used the exact same book as the "friend" of the six other children who were born before Rizal and the four that would follow after him. The cover of the book was lost but was repaired with a blue sheet of paper and a piece of cloth.

Contrary to popular belief, Rizal was reading poorly. Lolay became impatient and took the book from him only to discover that Rizal had drawn rude pictures on its pages! Naturally, Rizal was scolded and told how to care for and respect books. Then she instructed the boy to listen as she read. But Rizal was bored (I would like to think Rizal was actually reading poorly because he was distracted by his rude drawings on the book or worried that he would be found out and spanked or pinched for defacing one of Lolay's favorite books. In that context, the book title should have been "Enemigo de los Niños," because it was hardly an *amigo* at the time) Rizal instead busied himself watching the moths that were flying around the coconut oil lamp. When Rizal yawned, Lolay stopped reading and instead of shouting or giving him a pinch on the thigh to jolt him awake she said, "All right, I'm going to read you a nice story. Now pay attention."

The word "story" woke him up. Lessons were one thing, stories were another and it is one of the gaps in history that we do not know the name of Rizal's *yaya*, who was probably illiterate, but introduced him to folklore with tales about the man on the moon, the *aswang*, and the other terrible characters that kept naughty children at bay. So history records Lolay and how she started to leaf through the pages of the book in search of a story. Rizal actually wondered whether a good story could be found there. He had read the same book once before and found nothing of interest. To his surprise mother chose to read a story about moths, and instead of the Spanish text of the book, Lolay started to tell the story in Tagalog, translating the text bit by bit. Finally, she had Rizal's attention.

The now famous story (an animal version of the Greek legend of Icarus, his pride and his flight around the sun), the moth and the flame, was read to Rizal. We are all familiar with this story about the old moth (not necessarily a mother or father) who warned a young moth not to fly too close to a lighted candle lest it die. But the young moth was so attracted to the candle's light and warmth it disregarded the older moth's practical advice. Round and round the flame it flew. Finally it hovered so near the flame that its wings got burned. It fell and died.

What is not in our textbooks is that while listening to the story, Rizal continued to watch the moths flying around the lamp on the table. One of the moths flew near the flame and burned its wings. It fell into the bottom of the coconut oil lamp, fluttered its wings for a while, and became quiet. It was dead, not by burning but by drowning.

That night Lolay tucked Rizal into bed and repeated the lesson of the story. "Do not behave like the young moth," she warned him. "Do not be disobedient or you may get burnt as it did."

Recounting this story in his diary, Rizal wrote these forgotten lines: "Moths were no longer insignificant insects to me. They talked; they knew how to warn; they advised just like my mother."

There are a number of overlooked details in this story that should be emphasized. First, Rizal read poorly at the time and we must credit his mother for encouraging in him a life of the mind. Second, Rizal only listened when the story was retold in Tagalog, proof that children should learn using their mother tongue. Third, in the 21st century, the child pacifier is not a rubber thing shoved into a restless child's mouth, it is the TV set. Can we convince parents to read to their children instead of sitting them in front of the TV? Now that is the real challenge.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Rain songs

"RAIN, rain go away, come again another day…"

It's one of those nursery rhymes that won't go away. For children, these rhymes easily catch their attention, the simplicity of the lyrics and the tune inviting them to quickly chime in. The adults will watch, some getting into the act as well while others play out the tunes in their heads.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

The other day, I was listening to a local Ivory CD compilation of nursery rhymes when "Rain, rain" caught my attention. Maybe it was because it's now the rainy season, but in part, too, the lyrics sparked my curiosity as an anthropologist, wondering how the song came about. So on a rainy afternoon, I checked the Internet and came up with some interesting information about that song.

Ombrophobia

I'll get back to origins in a while, but let's start off with the way we fear rain, almost to the point of having a national phobia. I did a column some years back about this ombrophobia (also sometimes known as pluviophobia), taking off from an observation from foreigners: "How come in our countries, when it rains students find ways to protect their books from getting wet, while in the Philippines, your students use the books as umbrellas?"

It's strange. We're surrounded by water so we usually love water, even playing in the rain. But we also fear the rain because we think that's what makes us catch colds and flu. Actually, it works out this way: When it rains you tend to dash for cover, and since everyone's doing the same thing, you end up mingling with a crowd, several of whom may be harboring the cold and flu viruses. So it's not the rain itself, our health professionals will assure us, that causes the respiratory illnesses, although I suspect some Filipino doctors will go dashing through the rain, too, with one hand over their heads.

It was probably the Americans who introduced the "Rain, rain" ditty, and I'm not surprised it caught on, given our aversion to rain. Besides our notions about rain inducing colds, I suspect we may have an equivalent of SAD (seasonal affective disorder), the depression induced by winters. We don't have winters but the monsoon season can mean less sunlight and when a typhoon strikes, lingering for several days, sequestration at home can create cabin fever.

With particularly strong typhoons, there can be even more adverse effects. Howling winds, trees crashing, floodwaters rushing in—these are part of the realities in which many Filipinos grow up, and they can be traumatizing, especially when children see death and massive destruction. We've been spared tsunamis, but we've also had our share of monumental tragedies coming with rains, from the floods of Ormoc to the landslides in Antipolo.

Make it rain

"Rain, rain go away, come again another day, children want to play." That's the version we use here. But it's interesting how the original version tried to wish the rain to Spain. (I'm suddenly remembering another little rhyme, "The rain in Spain stays mainly on the plain"…mangled by a cockney or Australian accent: "The Rhine in spine.")

Back to the nursery rhyme's origins. It seems "Rain, rain" dates back to the 16th century, to Queen Elizabeth I, a period marked by rivalries between Spain and England. In 1588, there was a sea battle between the two countries, and although the English had smaller ships, they won the battle, helped along by stormy weather disabling the Spanish Armada. Thus, the other version of the nursery rhyme goes: "Rain, rain go away, come again another day. Little Johnny wants to play; Rain, rain, go to Spain, never show your face again!"

There are even longer versions which add: "Rain, rain, pour down, but not a drop on our town. Rain on the green grass, and rain on the tree, and rain on the housetop, but not on me. Rain, rain, go away, come again on washing day. Rain, rain, go to Germany, and remain there permanently. Rain, rain, go away, come on Martha's wedding day."

It's intriguing how that original variation wishes rain on others (Spain and Germany), but invites the rain back on washing day and on Martha's wedding day (don't ask me who Martha is). Our version simply says children want to play (but adds a strange line about an old man with a bump on his head.)

As kids we'd pray, or wish hard, "Make it rain" (I think there's a song with that title), hoping classes would be suspended. That was especially the case when we didn't do our homework, or when an exam was scheduled that day.

It isn't just kids who wish for rain these days. I can imagine that teachers do, too, sometimes, weary with the long hours and hard work. And for many other people who slave away for low wages an unscheduled rainy holiday can be most welcome. (Note though that journalists, columnists included, never have these holidays. Rain or shine, we deliver!)

Refreshing rain

Through most of my childhood, I never really liked rain, associating it with inconveniences, from muddied streets to getting stranded in the floods. In adolescence, rains came to be associated with falling in and out of love, "rain, rain go away" giving way now to Astrud Gilberto's plaintive "A Certain Sadness." Remember the opening lines about looking out the window as it rains, and "wondering whether weather like this gets you too…"?

In college, volunteer work in rural areas gave me a more mixed view of rains. I remember several summers in the Cordillera marked by strong afternoon rains. Those rains were sometimes depressing because we couldn't do anything as the rains went on and on into the night. "Rain, rain go away…" was most appropriate.

But the farmers saw things differently. As early as mid-May, the absence of afternoon rains created anxieties among the farmers, who would fret, wondering if there was going to be a drought. The earlier the afternoon rains came, the more reason for celebration, an anticipation of a longer wet season and more bountiful harvests.

With age, I've learned to appreciate that aspect of rains as well. The summer months bring forth colorful blooms, but as the rains begin, you find new life slowly being coaxed out from the earth, including many life-sustaining crops.

Rains bring relief from the heat. I particularly enjoy the breezes that come right before and right after a storm, and let's face it, at night the rains can become a soothing lullaby. Maybe too, with age, the rains bring a different form of relief, as we face new responsibilities—I like the way the rains keep the young indoors, out of harm's way.

If you run out of things for the kids to do, you could play different rain songs. Besides the nursery rhyme, there's something about B.J. Thomas' "Raindrops keep falling on my head" from "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid." Raindrops, sort of a metaphor for our many day-to-day trials and tribulations, may keep falling, but we pluck up optimistic courage: "…there's one thing I know, the blues they send to meet me won't defeat me, it won't be long till happiness steps up to greet me." You figure out how and when that happiness is going to come about.

ATTENTION LAWYERS

University of the Philippines Law Center
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MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION (MCLE)
COMPLIANCE PROGRAM FOR LAWYERS
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Non-Completion or Non-Compliance with the 36-unit MCLE Requirement during the 1st Compliance Period which ended on 31 December 2004, would mean being listed as a delinquent member of the IBP and will not be permitted to practice law until such time as adequate proof of Compliance is received by the Supreme Court MCLE Governing Board. *LAWYERS MAY AVAIL OF U.P. LAW CENTER'S MCLE - ONE WEEK COURSE (36 UNITS) on JULY 25-29, 2005 AT THE LECTURE HALL, FIRST FLOOR, BOCOBO HALL, U.P. LAW CENTER*

DATE	SUBJECT	CREDIT HOURS*	LECTURERS
25 July	Legal Malpractice (*Legal Ethics*)	Three (3) (9:00-12:00)	Justice Hector L. Hofilena
	Pre Trial and Trial Techniques (*Pre Trial and Trial Skills*)	Four (4) (2:00-6:00)	Justice Edilberto G. Sandoval
26 July	Duties of the Lawyer to the Client (*Legal Ethics*)	Three (3) (9:00-12:00)	DCA Zenaida N. Elepano
	Recent Developments in Intellectual Property Laws (*MCLE Prescribed*)	Three (3) (1:00-4:00)	Atty. Emma Carino- Francisco
27 July	Insolvency and Corporate Rehabilitation (*Substantive Law*)	Three (3) (9:00-12:00)	Atty. Manuel Yngson
	The Art of Direct and Cross Examination (*Oral Advocacy*)	Two (2))1:00-3:00)	Justice Diosdado M. Peralta
	Common Errors in Appellate Pleadings (*Legal Writing*)	Two (2) (3:15-5:15)	Justice Hugo E. Gutierrez
28 July	Bill of Rights: Right to Privacy (*Substantive Law*)	Three (3) (9:00-12:00)	Prof. Florin T. Hilbay
	Updates in Civil Law (*Substantive Law*)	Three (3) (1:00-4:00)	Prof. Danilo L. Concepcion
	Practice and Procedure of Arbitration (*ADR*)	Two (2) (4:15-6:15)	Dean Custodio O. Parlade
29 July	Recent Developments in Taxation Law (*MCLE Prescribed*)	Three (3) (9:00-12:00)	Prof. Serafin U. Salvador
	Problems in International Law Practice before Philippine Courts (*International Law*)	Two (2) (1:00-3:00)	Dean Merlin M. Magallona
	Court Annexed and Court Referred Mediation (*ADR*)	Three (3) (3:15-6:15)	Prof. Alfredo F. Tadiar

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LETTERS

Can't we just focus on nation-building?

COULD we please just focus on the business of nation-building? *Magpapalit na naman ng Presidente*—who do you have in mind as a replacement anyway?

I am not a Gloria Arroyo fan. But what the woman needs is undivided help in steering the country at last toward some palpable sense of well-being. All those sanctimonious noisemakers should stop casting stones—an act quite incomprehensible considering the pride we all have in our thoroughly Christian country, especially as they have no idea how to do the job better. And at least the woman has the decency to bow her head in penance—unlike the terrible "Jose Velarde" who remains arrogant in his ignorance to this day. Now, please—she needs to get back to work!

To our politicians, the whole sordid lot of them: focus on public service. Know its meaning and eat it for breakfast, lunch and dinner. It is the essence why you are in your lofty positions. *Makonsensiya na kayo sa taong-bayan na umaasa sa inyo, sa mga batang Pilipino na wala ng magandang kinabukasan na hinaharap.*

To my beloved countrymen: *Hindi si* Susan Roces *ang sagot sa problema ng bayan*. Focus on the meaning of public service. Eat it for breakfast as well; it will go a long way in augmenting the meager food you now put on your tables. After you have digested it, you will know that the answer does not lie in taking to the streets each time you are disappointed with your leader, but in supporting that person with all the good you can do, for all the good that he/she can do.

People power, as you have defined it, has grown lame. It no longer stirs the inner patriot in me. And my guilt about leaving the country is draining away fast, whenever I hear of still another *moro-moro* that demands a change in our lead players—but not a change in the theme of our nation's story.

Mabuhay ang Pilipinas? How can I say that with conviction when I can see it slowly dying in the hands of those who do not learn their lessons well?

—MATEY ALBERTO,
Los Angeles, CA,
matter918@yahoo.com

Manila is not the Philippines

THE JULY 1 issue of the INQUIRER showed a colored illustration depicting President Macapagal-Arroyo. It was surrounded by a crowd with placards demanding as follows: "Sorry Gloria *Alis Ka Na*," "Fake President, Resign," "We Want Gloria Out," "Oust Gloria Now."

A question may be asked: Since when did Manila become the Philippines? Surely, the Philippines is not Metro Manila.

In yesterday's TV show, the Cebuanos and Ilonggos suggested to GMA that she transfer Malacañang to Cebu or Iloilo. They clapped their hands to signify their approval of the suggestion.

I was reliably told that the crowd at the anti-GMA rally was paid by the opposition. To me, as a simple and humble citizen, it is all right if the people go to such gatherings in the exercise of their constitutional rights, but not if they are just made tools by selfish politicians who are hungry for power.

—FACUNDO S. TALLO, 6 North 1st St.,
Angela Vill., Talon, Las Piñas City

Political Church

THE PHILIPPINES is fast emerging among the most corrupt countries in the world. Thanks to the Catholic Church in the Philippines, which has forgotten its spiritual duty to the nation when it engaged full time in politics after the fall of the dictator Marcos!

Corruption, which is the root of all evil, is something that can be traced to the morality of a person. Instead of ministering to uplift the moral standards of the Filipino people, what has the Church done? Every homily in the Philippines is now tinged with political color, instead of instilling Christian discipline and teaching the faithful how to be good persons and how to love their fellowmen.

Start with the family if we are to stamp out corruption. If each member of the family would be able to listen to "sermons" which would strengthen their resolve to stay away from the temptations of an easy life, then we might yet be able to root out this problem, which is eating up the very heart of our society.

—PERCIVAL CALBES,
calbeper@adelphia.net

The forgotten side of Senator Pimentel

CONRADO de Quiros strayed when he accused Sen. Aquilino Pimentel of losing moral ground by associating with President Estrada and Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, as if they are plagues to be avoided. (PDI, 7/6/05)

But even if they were, De Quiros has obviously lost touch of Christ's basic lessons, particularly at those times when the Lord was condemned by the self-righteous for dining with sinners.

De Quiros may want to recall that Pimentel chose to languish in jail four times rather than yield to the pressures of martial rule, in which Enrile played a major part.

As Senate president, Pimentel cast a numerically insignificant vote to open the controversial second envelope, when it would have been convenient for him to stay quiet on the sidelines.

In these instances, Pimentel never gained the world. He lost it.

By the way, De Quiros was misleading when he wrote that Pimentel found himself sharing the same stage with his tormentor when he ran on Estrada's ticket in 1998. Enrile was in the middle of his Senate term then. But I don't want to believe De Quiros was trying to spruce his column with a tinge of factual dishonesty. For that would be one bad lesson on morality.

—ELMAR DEJARESCO,
San Ignacio Street,
Mandaluyong City

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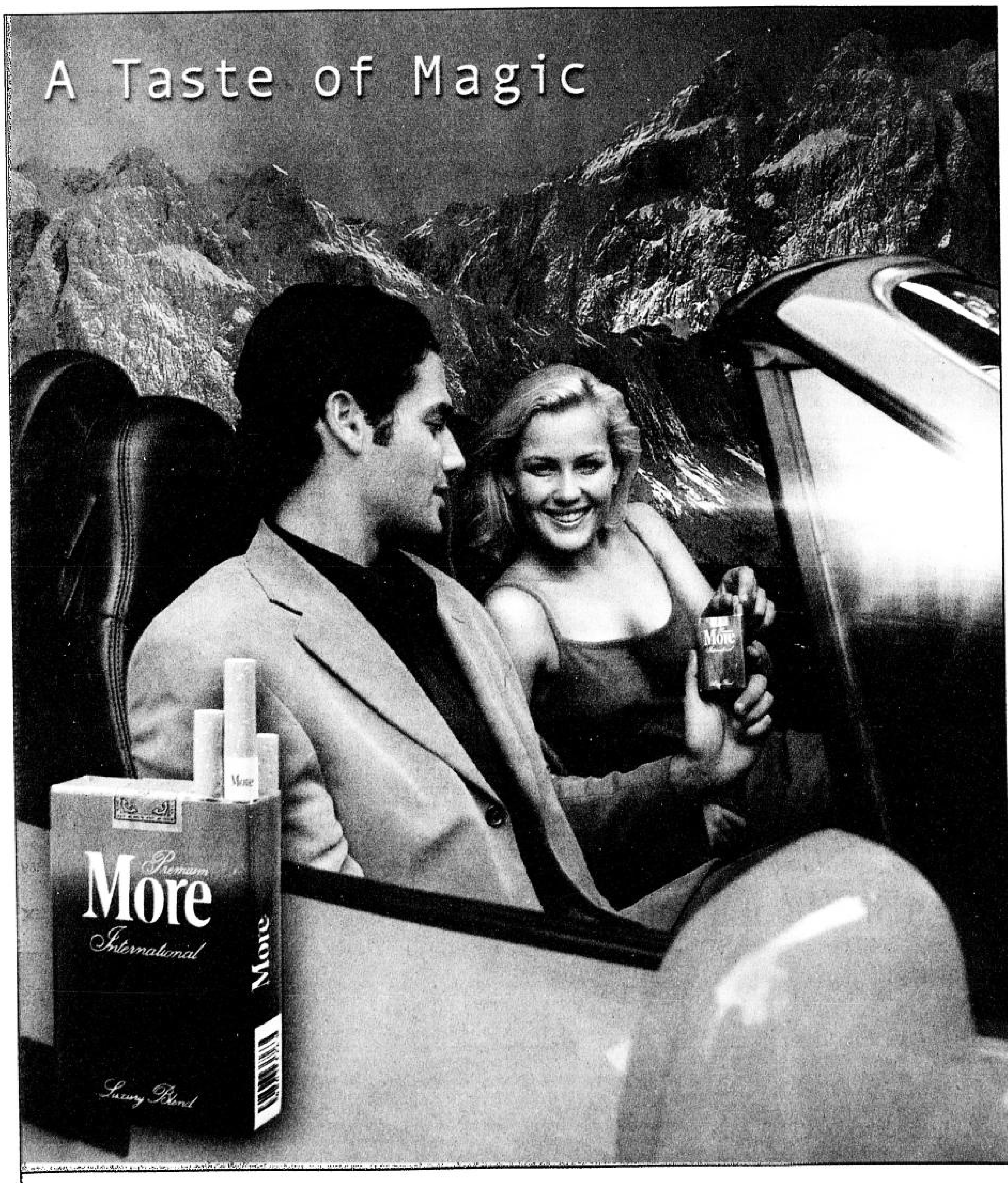

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Only 2 of 9 bets in ARMM attend peace covenant meet

DAVAO CITY—Only two of the nine gubernatorial candidates in the Aug. 8 elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) showed up during Monday's signing of a peace covenant initiated by the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

Those who attended the covenant signing at the Marco Polo Hotel here were gubernatorial candidates Ibrahim Paglas III and former ARMM speaker and Maguindanao Rep. Guimid Matalam.

Reelectionist Gov. Parouk Hussin and Mayor Zaldy Ampatuan of Shariff Aguak town in Maguindanao sent representatives.

Those who did not bother to send any representative were gubernatorial candidates ARMM Vice Gov. Mahid Mutilan, Ahmad Nooh, Ali Omar, Mangakop Saud and the only female candidate, Warina Sushi Jukuy.

The seven vice gubernatorial aspirants also failed to show up.

But Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos said the absence of the other candidates did not bother him at all.

"Maybe the others are not here due to unavailability of time," he said.

The signatories to the covenant pledged not to "personally or through our supporters, impose our will upon any voter, by way of force or violence, threat or intimidation, corrupt him with money or in any manner, destroy his inherent right and freedom of choice."

The candidates also promised to abide by the rules and regulations being enforced in the ARMM elections as well as prohibitions on carrying and transporting of firearms and other deadly weapons, and the use of security personnel and bodyguards.

The candidates also promised to "accept the results of the elections and shall not unnecessarily delay the proclamation of the winning candidates and prevail upon our supporters to do the same."

In Isabela, Basilan, Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu warned soldiers and their commanders against allowing the counting or canvassing of ballots inside military camps.

"There will be no more counting of ballots inside [camps]. We will put a stop to this practice," Abu said during a meeting with 103rd Army Brigade officers and soldiers in Isabela on Monday.

"I don't want the AFP to get involved in politics, we should be non-partisan," Abu said.

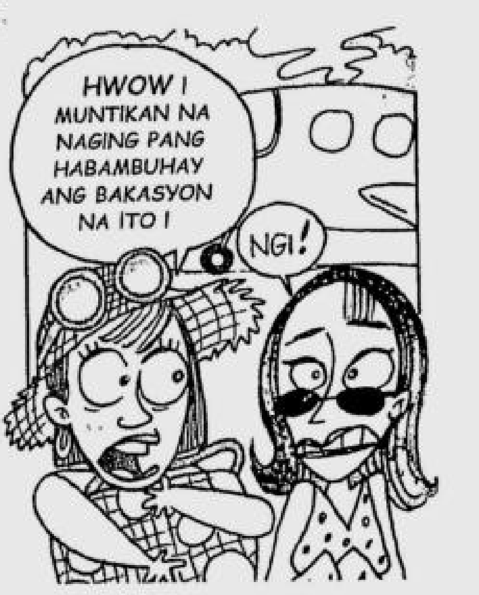
Representatives of the influential Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) are scheduled to visit the country before the holding of the Aug. 8 elections in the ARMM to review the peace agreement between the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Philippine government.

MNLF interim chief Hatimil Hasan said the visit was one of the important points agreed on during the recent Regional Conference of Foreign Ministers on June 28 in San'a, Yemen.

The OIC also agreed to the planned reactivation of the government-MNLF joint monitoring team.

Hasan, also ARMM regional legislative speaker, said the OIC will convene them along with government representatives for a review of the peace accord implementation.

The MNLF signed a final peace agreement with the Philippine government on Sept. 2, 1996. *Anthony Allada, Julie Alipala and Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau*


HWOW ! MUNTIKAN NA NAGING PANG HABAMBUHAY ANG BAKASYON NA ITO !
NGI!

Plane blocks airport runway near Boracay

ILOILO CITY—Operations at the Caticlan Airport in Malay, Aklan was suspended yesterday after its runway was blocked by a 32-seat commercial aircraft whose rear wheel collapsed while landing at airport at 9 a.m. yesterday.

The 20 passengers, who were bound for the resort-island of Boracay and four crew members of the jet-powered aircraft, operated by Interisland Airline, were safely evacuated, said Allan Java, Air Transportation Office (ATO) manager in Western Visayas.

He said that based on an ATO report in Caticlan, the rear wheel of the plane's right side gave way after the plane touched down at the tarmac at about 9 a.m. The plane swerved and the collapsed wheel got stuck on the runway's shoulder.

Since the plane blocked the 950-meter long runway, the incoming flights were diverted to the airport in the capital town of Kalibo, about one and a half hours away.

The outgoing flights were cancelled and the passengers were told to take their flights at the Kalibo Airport.

The Asian Spirit, in a statement, said all its flights have also been diverted to Kalibo.

It said the airline deployed BAe 146 jets, advance turbo propeller aircraft, and Dash 7s to Kalibo "to ensure that all passengers leaving from Manila and Caticlan are all served." *Nestor Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau*

Puerto hosts cocoa confab

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—This city is hosting this year's second annual Sustainable Extension Service for Smallholders Alliance (Success) Regional Cocoa Conference at the Legend Hotel on July 21-23.

The conference, organized by the Agricultural Cooperatives Development International-Volunteers on Overseas Cooperative Assistance (ACDI-VOCA) in cooperation with the Cocoa Philippines Foundation Inc. (Cocoaphil) and World Cocoa Foundation, hopes to open new windows for alternative livelihood to farmers in the city through cocoa farming.

City agriculture Officer Melissa Macasaet said the meet would benefit many farmers here since the city has a wide land area suitable for cocoa farming.

Macasaet added that the Cocoaphil and WCF would give some 100 cocoa seedlings to the more than 600 potential cocoa farmers in the city.

Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn lauded the organizers, saying the event would benefit not only the farmers but also the entire city. *Geraldford Ticke, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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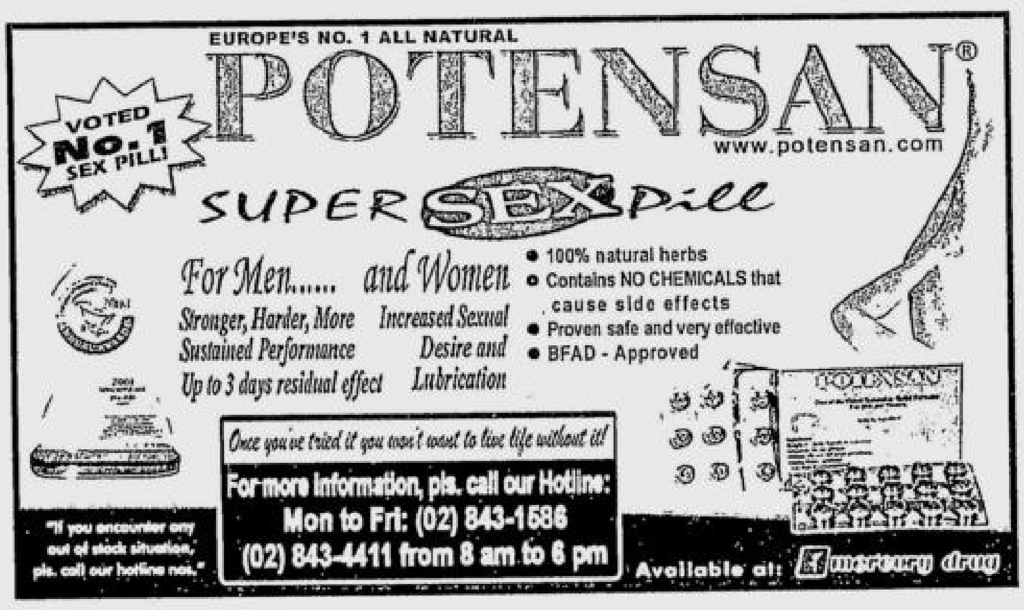
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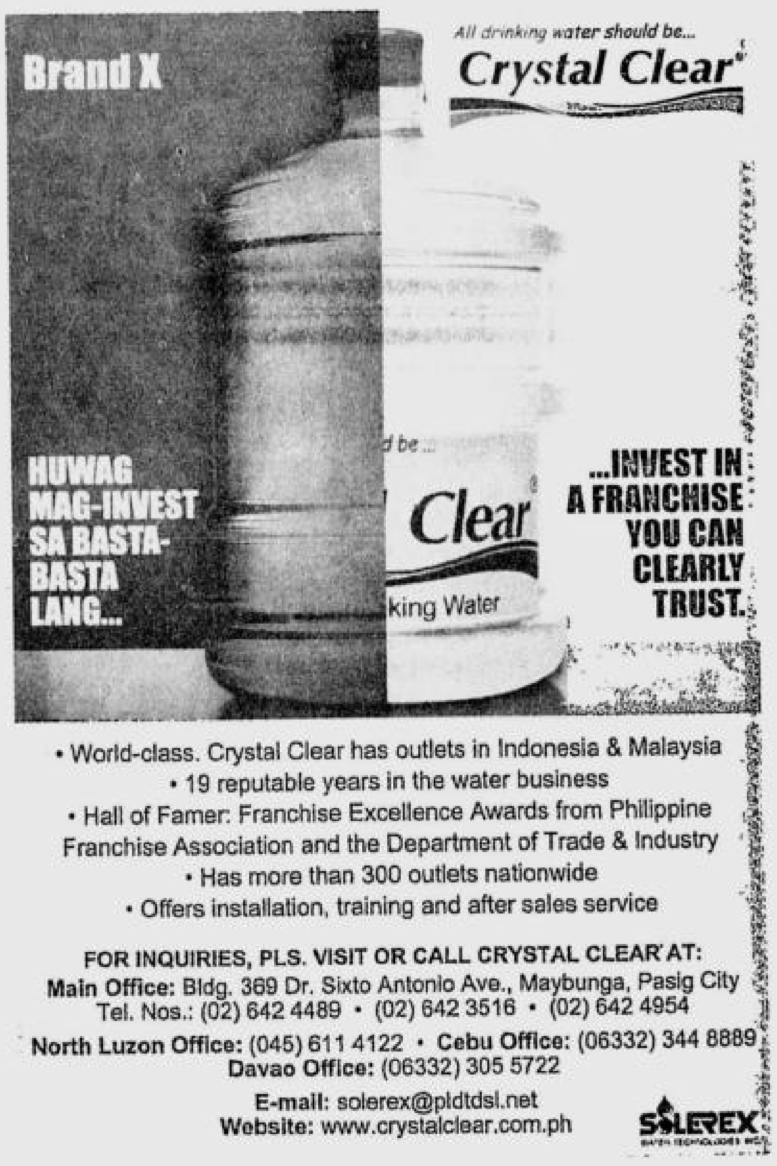
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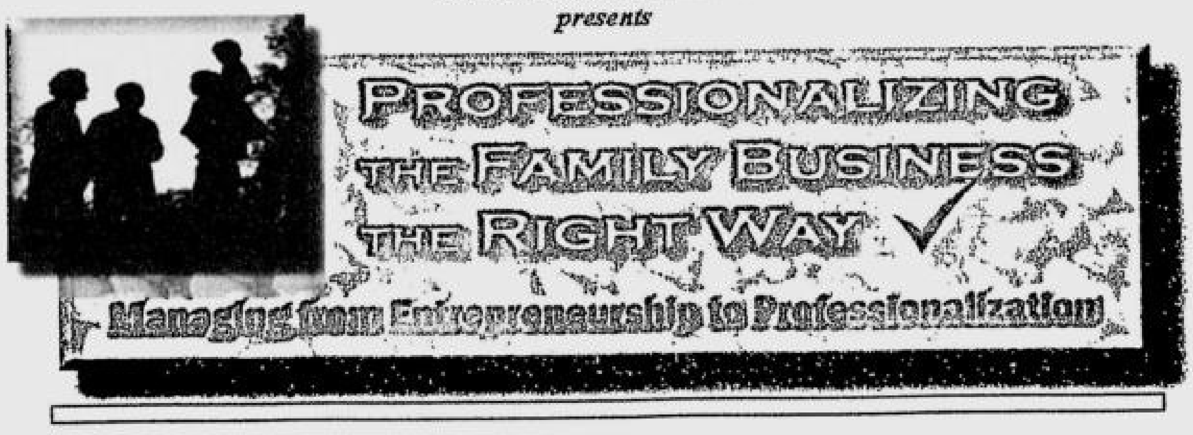
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Marine park in Subic to stay open, says DENR

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Environment Secretary Michael Defensor ruled out the immediate closure of a marine park here where three false killer whales had died over the last four years, according to a Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau official.

PAWB Director Theresa Mundita Lim, head of a DENR investigating team sent here on Tuesday, said the shutdown of Ocean Adventure, an action sought by animal welfare groups, would only come after an evaluation would show strong basis for the facility's closure.

Animal welfare

"Instead of being antagonistic about it, we are giving the project proponent a chance to explain how it addressed animal welfare and environmental protection issues," Lim said.

The Subic Bay Marine Exploratorium Inc. (SBMEI) has operated the park, located at the Camayan Wharf, since February 2001.

Earlier, Gregorio Magdaraog, Ocean Adventure vice president for corporate affairs, said closing the park would "not only sentence the marine mammals there to certain death but would deprive Filipinos of the opportunity to truly appreciate the value of marine mammals as partners of humanity in the enormous tasks of saving our oceans."

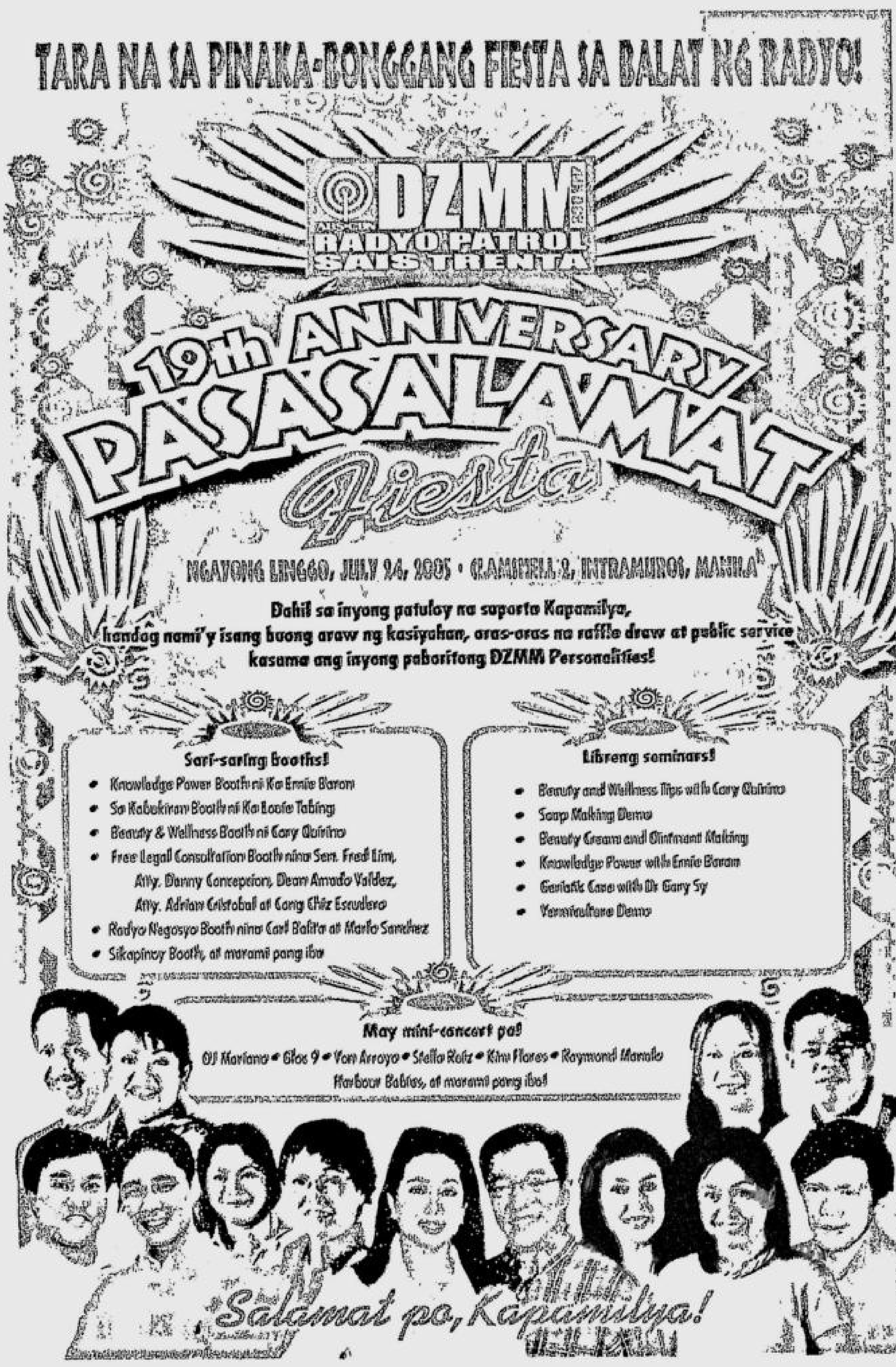
The Earth Island Institute-Philippines, which has opposed the venture, said the death of the whales—Hook on July 8 this year, Coral in January 2004 and Deuce in July 2001—was enough reason to stop holding animals in captivity for entertainment shows.

Imported

The SBME, through the Subic Management Associates, imported at least six false killer whales (*Pseudorca crassidens*) and eight South American sea lions (*Otaria byronia*) from China in 2000. A fisheries special permit covered that importation, documents from the Department of Agriculture showed.

EII said the project was not consulted with the committee on animal welfare, an entity created by the Philippine Animal Welfare Act or Republic Act 8485.

Lim said the PAWB would review the environmental impact study (EIS) of the SBMEI and the environmental clearance certificate (ECC) issued to it by the ecology center of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.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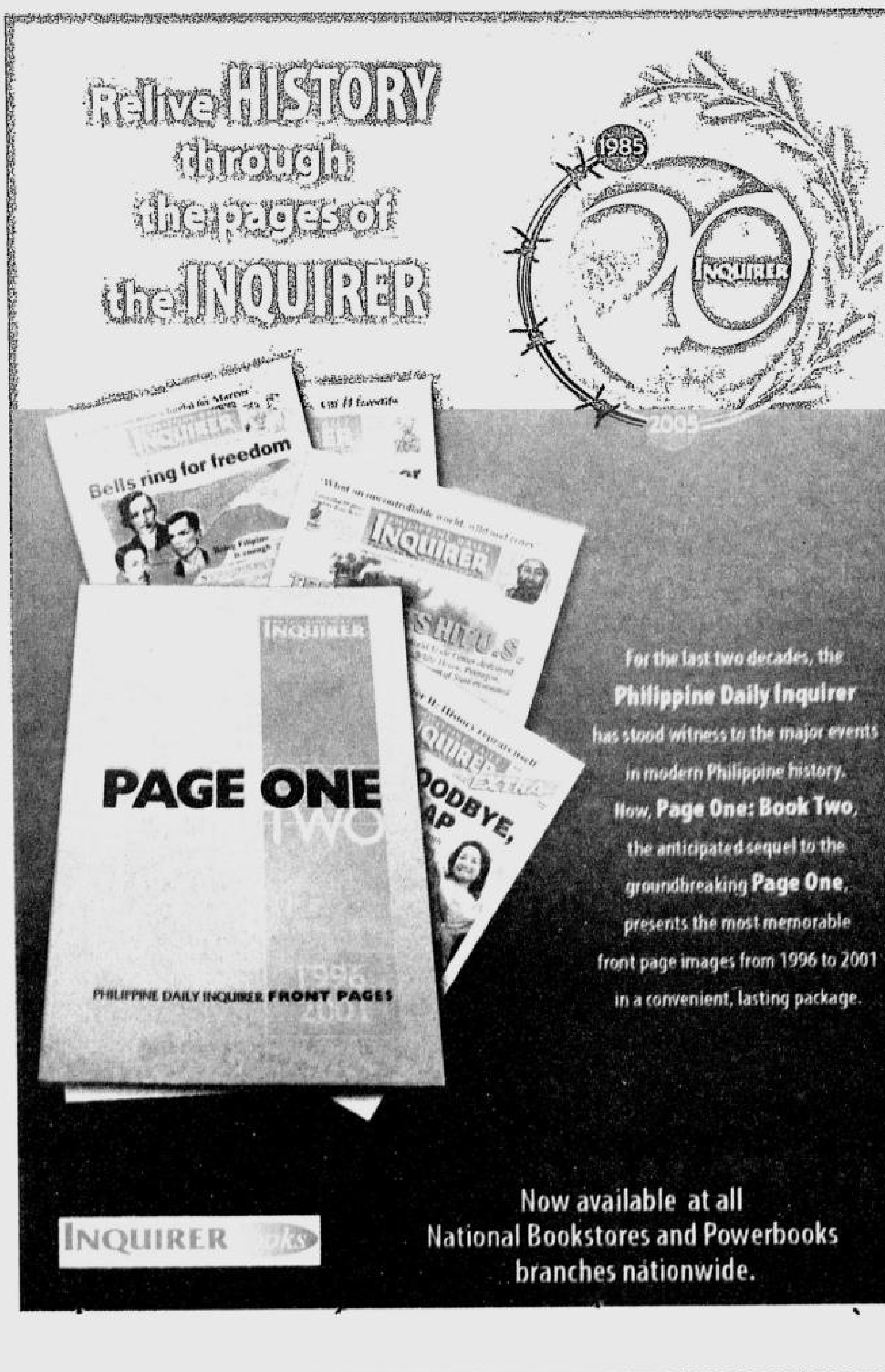
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Indigenous folk evicted by mayor from Baguio lots

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Indigenous peoples on Tuesday fought demolition squads sent by the city government to remove more than 30 houses that were built on a government reservation now being used as a dairy farm and research facility here.

No one was hurt but city demolition team members were bracing for a week long operation.

Dr. Georgia Kalngan, the farm's operation manager, said the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples has stalled the demolition since 2003 after the agency issued a restraining order against the Department of Agriculture.

Three Ibaloi clans have staked their ancestral land claims over the farm—the Quillo and Ikang Paus families and the heirs of Mateo Cariño, the Ibaloi herdsman who won a United States Supreme Court ruling that acknowledged his ancestral rights over what is now Camp John Hay in the early 1900s.

But the Court of Appeals issued a resolution last week affirming its April reversal of the NCIP injunction. The CA said the NCIP had no jurisdiction over the farm.

The ruling affects the claims of the Ikang Paus family over a portion of the 94-hectare government property.

Myrna Caoagas, ancestral domain officer, issued a letter certifying that NCIP has not issued the Ikang Paus family a Certificate of Ancestral Land Title (CALT).

The NCIP has yet to issue ancestral land titles covering Baguio City, following a controversy over alleged midnight titles that were processed during the administration of former President Joseph Estrada.

A separate CA ruling, however, affirmed NCIP's jurisdiction over an injunction petition filed by the Cariño family, said Leilene Carantes-Gallardo, NCIP Cordillera director.

"This means we have to address the two conflicting rulings from the court," she said.

Kalngan said Mayor Braulio Yaranon sent the demolition team on the strength of the first CA resolution.

DA is preparing to modernize the farm by rebuilding its dairy facilities and by restocking its cattle population in the face of proposals to break it up in favor of other government agencies, Kalngan said.

ROUNDUP

Tons of fish confiscated

IKULONG AT ITAPON ANG SUSI.

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—The Navy's Task Force 41 stationed in Palawan has confiscated fishermen's catch in Batangas. While patrolling Linapacan town, the Navy men caught 39 fisherman onboard FB Gloria, a boat registered in Batangas. The 39 fishermen were caught using fine mesh nets, which is a violation of the Fisheries Code of the Philippines. The owner of the boat was identified as Ramon Zamesa of Nasugbu, Batangas, while the boat's captain was Restituto Comendador. In Roxas, Palawan, more than 700 kilograms of fish were also confiscated by Task Force 41. They caught 16 fishermen on board two boats using "hulbot-hulbot," another illegal means of fishing. The confiscated fish were turned over to municipal agriculture offices.

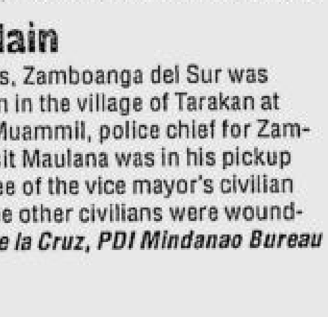
Jofelle Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Vice mayor ambushed, slain

PAGADIAN CITY—The vice mayor of Dinas, Zamboanga del Sur was killed when ambushed by unidentified men in the village of Tarakan at around 3 p.m. Sunday. Chief Supt. Karib Muammil, police chief for Zamboanga del Sur, said Vice Mayor Abdulbasit Maulana was in his pickup truck when ambushed. Muammil said three of the vice mayor's civilian escorts were also killed in the attack. Three other civilians were wounded.

Hernan de la Cruz, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Tipid-abono program


TIPID NA, SAFE PA!

CITY OF CALAPAN—Former Land Bank of the Philippines president and now Finance Secretary Gary Teves led the Department of Agriculture's recent launching here of the Tipid-Abono Program that recommends organic pesticide which, he said, is less expensive. In a separate event here, he also asked the local government to help increase tax collection.

Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Bridge to be finished soon

ROXAS CITY—An official of the Second Engineering District in Capiz expressed optimism that the construction of the P17-million bridge in Dumalag town will finally be completed this year after being stalled by frequent floods. Hector Gargoles, acting assistant second district engineer, said the bridge was already 90 percent completed and was expected to be finished by September this year. The construction of the 10-span bridge started in January 2003 and was supposed to be finished in February this year. The bridge, about 250 meters long and eight meters wide, crosses the Panay River linking the town's Barangays Poblacion and San Roque.

Felipe Celino, PDI Visayas Bureau

COA probes 2 auditors in Pampanga

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The Commission on Audit is investigating two provincial auditors in Pampanga over alleged unexplained wealth and graft involving the capitol's quarry operations, infrastructure and social services contracts.

The investigation came on the heels of a complaint filed by a "Concerned Kapampangan" at the Office of the President, according to Raquel Ramirez-Habitan, COA assistant commissioner and general counsel.

Habitan authorized a COA team to "administer oaths, take testimony, summon witnesses and compel the production of documents by compulsory process" based on Presidential Decree No. 1445 or the government auditing code.

The COA has reassigned the two auditors to Angeles City and Masantol town.

The complaint against the two auditors cited the alleged complicity of six former and current provincial capitol executives as well as four top COA regional officials. It also revealed details on the supposed pieces of property and activities of the two auditors.

According to the complaint, the two auditors allegedly "manipulated" last year's audit report on quarry operations to hide the alleged non-remittance of revenues from at least 3,964 pads of receipts issued to barangay officials in Sto. Tomas and Minalin towns.

The receipts were allegedly produced by an unauthorized printing house and redistributed by the provincial quarry task force. The task force collects a tax of P300 per truckload of sand hauled out of Pampanga.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
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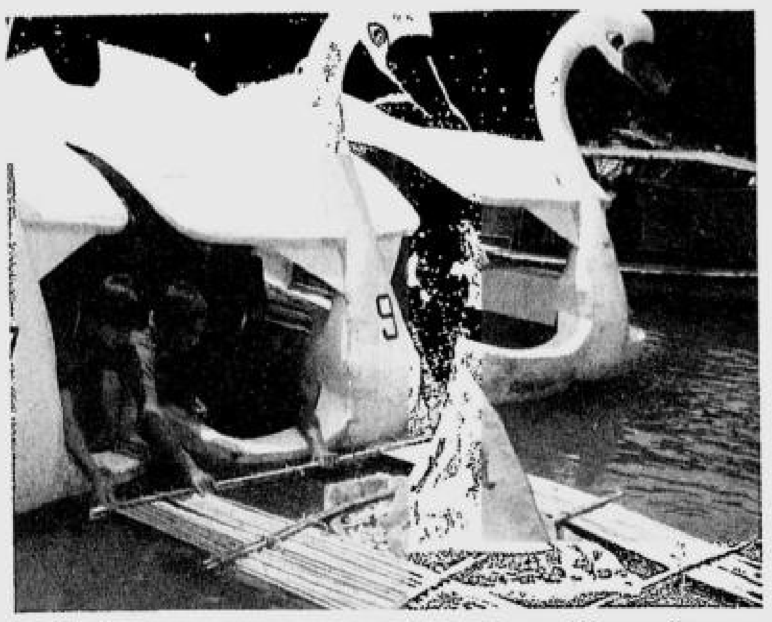
Baguio's ephemeral art transforms community

By Frank Cimatu
Baguio City



BAGUIO artists and residents perform the "Atang ti Kararua" to remember the victims of the July 16, 1990 killer earthquake. EV ESPIRITU

IN 1989, performance artist Roberto Villanueva found a small lagoon below the Baguio Convention Center where members of the Baguio Arts Guild (BAG) were preparing for their 2nd International Baguio Arts Festival.

He created an installation by floating coconut shells with candles on the underground river. Only a few people dared look at the "Atang ti Kararua" or "soul offering" at that time.

Little did Villanueva know that he would be instigating one of the more enduring forms of contemporary community art in the country.

On July 16, 1990, an earthquake measuring 7.7 magnitude in the Richter scale devastated the city and brought it to ruins. Literally to some people, as the Café by the Ruins run by artists, including Villanueva, Dave Baradas, Laida Lim Perez, Baboo Mondoñedo, Louie and Su Llamado, BenCab, Boy Yuchenco and Christine Arvisu, became the soup kitchen for some of the hungry then.

Villanueva also reprised his Atang ti Kararua, bringing it out of the convention center and into the Burnham Lake. It was a foggy dusk then and the lake was enveloped in fog.

The musicians among the BAG members, who would later form the core of Pinikpikan Band, beat gongs and drums as Villanueva and the other artists floated the coconut shells or the spirit boats laden with candles and flowers, and burned wishes for the dead.

Poignant scene

It was a poignant scene, considering that some residents were still looking for their missing kin (more than 400 officially declared dead and an almost equal number missing).

Anthropologist Katrin de Guia, then an active BAG member, later said in her upcoming book, "Kapwa: The Self in the Other," that Villanueva's Atang ti Kararua is one manifestation of art transforming the community.

But then Villanueva's ephemeral art was always community-driven, one reason De Guia included him among Filipino artists who were guided by the core values set in Sikolohiyang Filipino.

One of his first art works is the Cordillera Labyrinth modeled after the *camote* (sweet potato) plantations at the rice terraces. His labyrinth is made of *rono* (reed) that, like all mazes, has to be trodden on to be appreciated.

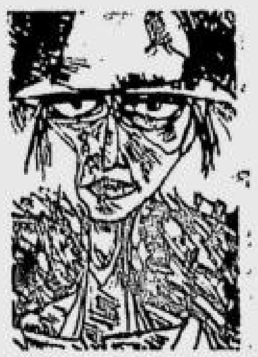
Other community-driven works are the "Mother's Mandala" made of the handkerchiefs of mothers, the "Earth Acupuncture" and the "Bridge of Cross Culture" that Villanueva made in Japan.

In 1991, Villanueva also made an installation among the Aeta people in Mt. Pinatubo, making a huge offering for Apo Namalyari, the deity who guards the awakened volcano, while the tribe people danced around it.

But his Atang ti Kararua outlasted even Villanueva, who died of leukemia in 1995.

Darnay explores the lithograph

By Grace Subido
Contributor



SELF-portrait of Darnay Demetillo.

IRISAN: Exploring the Lithograph," is a tongue-in-cheek title for the latest exhibit of University of the Philippines Baguio's artist-in-residence, Prof. Darnay Demetillo. It hints at the artist's experience of the creative process in his latest exploration in printing techniques.

"*Maraming binasura* (A lot were dumped)," Demetillo laughs, explaining the curious choice for the show's title, which nonetheless appropriately suggests the intricacies and technical challenges presented by his newest experimentation with the printing process. Irisan is the city's garbage dump.

Lithograph printing is a planographic process—the art of printing from a flat stone, or zinc, or aluminum plate on which a drawing or design has been made, similar to the procedure involved in printing newspapers.

There are no engravings or raised surfaces, unlike, for example, in relief printing with a woodblock or making a thumbprint.

"Pulling the print out [from the printing surface] is a thrill," he says, notwithstanding some problems encountered in his recent rediscovery of lithograph printing, a method that he first tried out 32 years ago.

As an artist, Demetillo constantly explores new ways of doing things. "Everything is discovery," he says, "and I find all the answers by myself."

("Irisan: Exploring the Lithograph" is an exhibit of new works by Prof. Darnay Demetillo in connection with his appointment to the UP Foundation professorial chair in fine arts and is in line with UP Baguio's activities to commemorate the investiture on July 21 of UP president, Dr. Emerlinda Roman. The show runs until July 22 at UP Baguio's Galerya Kordilyera).

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The duly elected members of the Board likewise elected the following during its organizational meeting:

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(Sgd.) **FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ**
Chairman

MALABON CITY

Squatters take over sidewalk

By Nancy C. Carvajal

SAYING that there were not enough funds for the relocation of informal settlers affected by a demolition in Malabon City, the local government temporarily allowed them to build their shanties on the roadside.

"I have to temporarily allow them to build their homes in the sidestreet before a proper relocation [site] could be found," said Mayor Canuto Oreta.

Oreta added that the local government had no budget to relocate the first 258 families removed from the four-hectare property of Benjie Chua that straddled Letre Road, Estania, Plata and Asero streets, all in Barangay Tugatog.

"With the help of the PCUP (Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor), I am hopeful that they could be moved to a relocation site immediately," Oreta said.

Humanitarian reasons

In the meantime, he said, they could stay as long as they would not obstruct traffic.

Oreta said he was allowing the squatters to stay on the street for humanitarian reasons.

The demolition order signed by Judge Benjamin Aquino of the Metropolitan Trial Court was finally implemented last Thursday after several delays, he said.

After the demolition, the informal settlers built their shanties in the middle of Letre Road, which the mayor said was a direct challenge to authorities.

"I cannot allow them to cause more chaos that could affect other residents," the mayor said.

Oreta said that before Thursday's demolition, leaders of the settlers signed an agreement that they would voluntarily tear down their houses and not move to the streets.

800 families to go

The agreement was signed to grant another extension to close to 800 more families, who were able to stay on in the disputed area up to July 14.

Signatories included a representative of Chua, Vice Mayor Arnold Vicencio, city councilors, Barangay Tugatog chair Rufing Bautista, city urban poor division head Yoly Mañalac and Rosie Mancili of the PCUP.

However, members of one group, the Samahang Letre, said they would not leave their homes.

"In (Chua's) land title it was not clear where his property begins and ends," one of their leaders said, adding that they were willing to fight for their homes.

Mañalac said another demolition would take place on Tuesday if the remaining families would not voluntarily leave.

NBI discovers Cebu link in drug import ring

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation (NBI) is looking for an Indian reportedly involved in the illegal importation and distribution of drugs following the arrest of his alleged Pakistani partner last week.

NBI Special Task Force chief lawyer Reynaldo Esmeralda said Pakistani Sami Amanullah had identified his Cebu-based accomplice as Surjet Singh.

"This group imports regulated drugs like Valium from Pakistan because medicines there are cheaper," Esmeralda said in an interview.

Amanullah, 38, was nabbed last April 14 at his house at 65 C.M. Recto St., Inner Circle, BF Homes, Parañaque City.

The NBI agents seized 780 tablets of 5 mg Valium or diazepam from his residence.

The agents also confiscated 107.2 g of alleged marijuana from Amanullah's bedroom, as well as P1 million worth of assorted medicines, including ointments and inhalers.

Charges readied

Esmeralda said that aside from charges for violation of the Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, they would also file a case of illegal importation of goods against Amanullah.

Esmeralda said that the possession and peddling of at least 10 g of illegal drugs would warrant life imprisonment to death.

The NBI official added that they would also investigate the persons whom Amanullah had sold the drugs to, as shown in his logbook.

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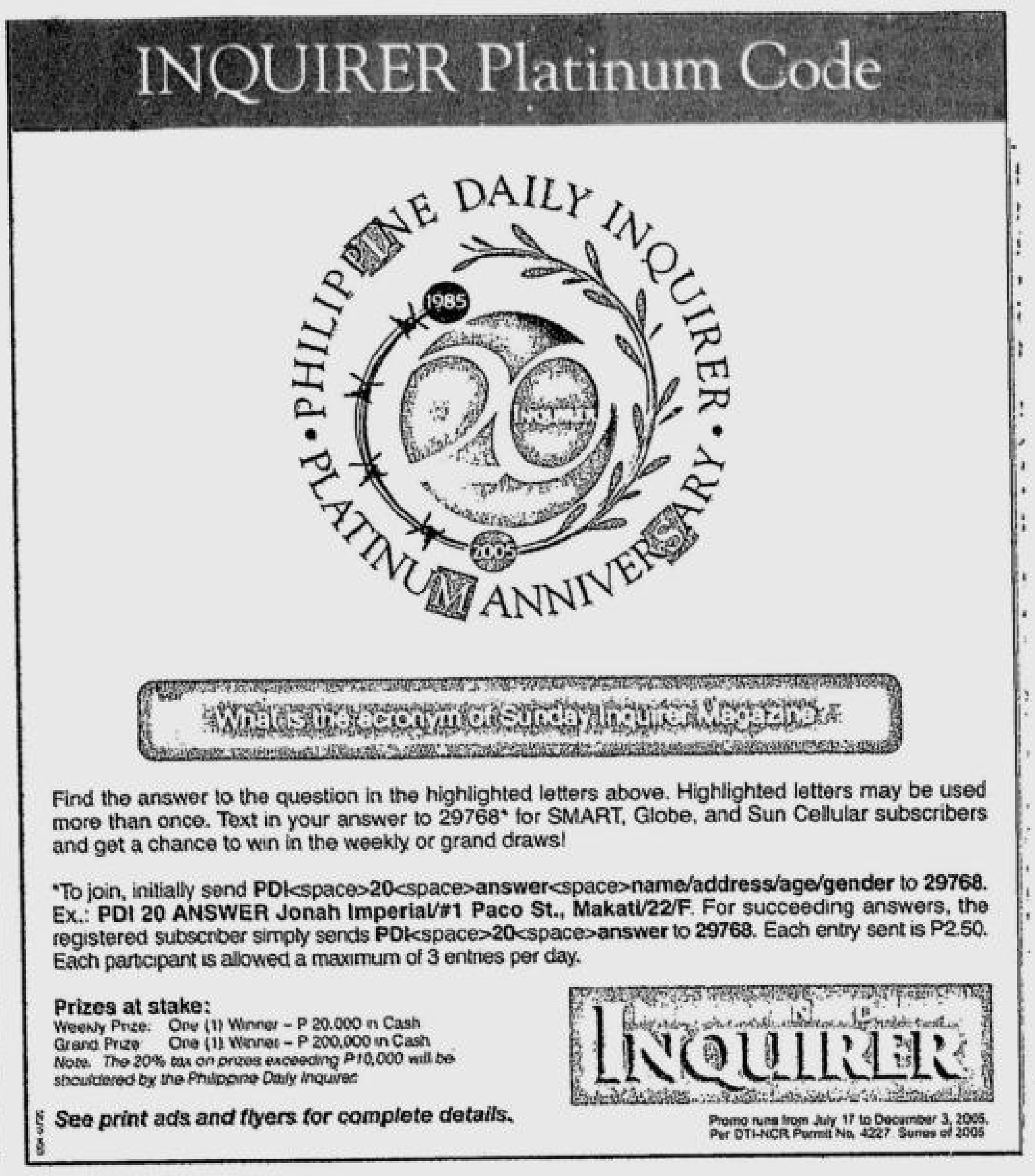
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Not during rush hours

By DJ Yap

QUEZON Avenue and other major thoroughfares in Quezon City may soon be off-limits to student drivers and their instructors when traffic is at its busiest.

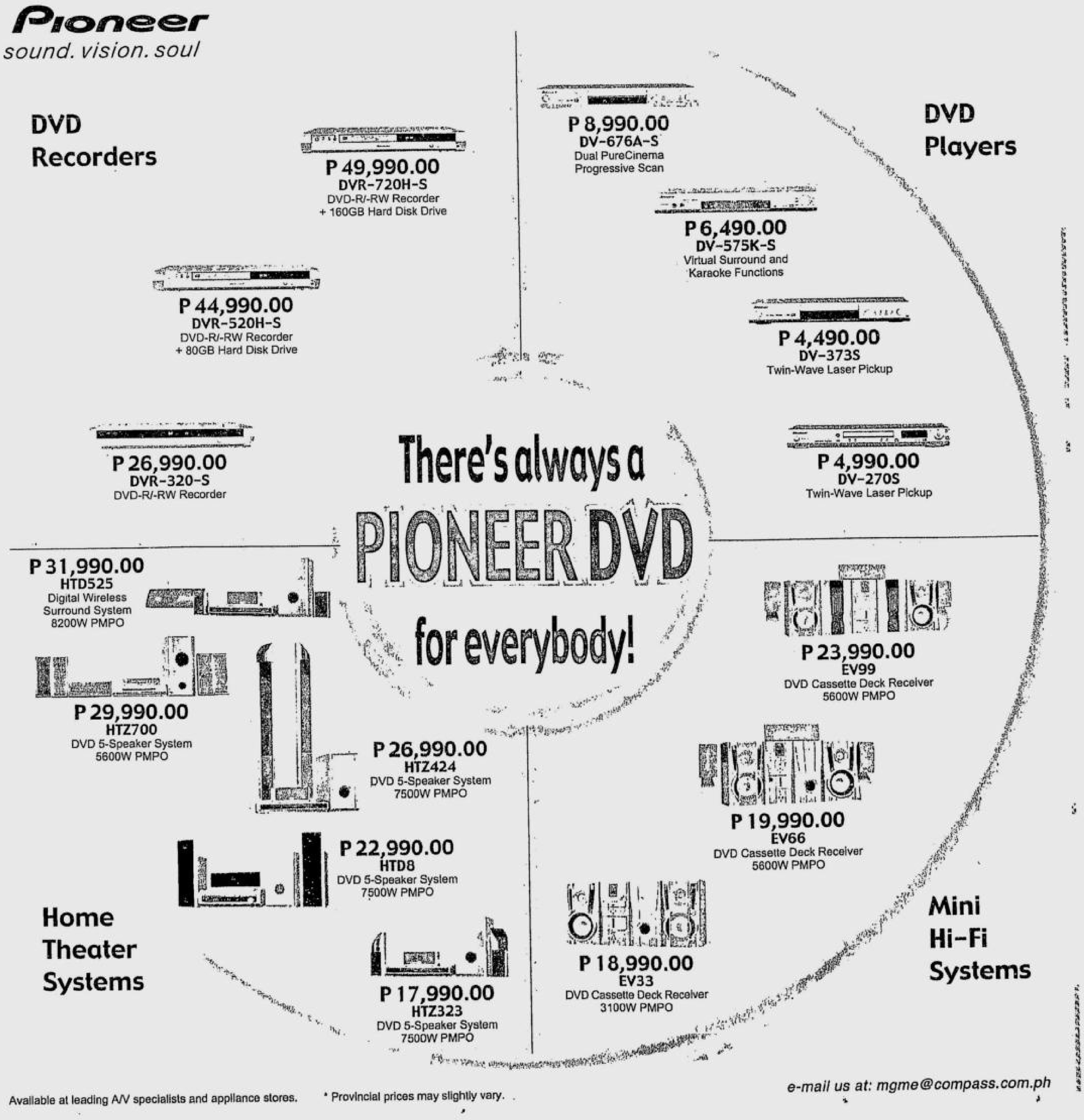
Quezon City lawmakers have proposed a ban on practice driving on the city's busy streets to avoid traffic jams and accidents.

Voltaire Godofredo Liban III and 10 other councilors noted that student drivers slowed down traffic and increased the risk of road mishaps.

The ordinance seeks to penalize student drivers caught practicing on busy avenues during peak hours from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m., and from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Seminar for UK visitors

THE BRITISH Council will present a predeparture briefing program to persons interested in living and studying in Britain. The one-day seminar will be held from July 25-27 and Aug. 1-4 at the British Council office, 10th floor, Taipan Place, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Registration fee is P300. For details, call Alec at 914-1011 to 14.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Malabon lawman relieved

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THE HEAD of the Maysilo, Malabon, police detachment has been relieved of his post after he was arrested Sunday night in Pampanga during a buy-bust operation.

Malabon police chief Supt. Moises Guevarra said he had assigned Insp. Fernancio Sampang Jr. to his office pending investigation of the illegal drugs charges filed against him.

"He is confined to my office until he is cleared or formally charged," Guevarra said.

According to a report filed by Chief Insp. Moises Villaceran of the Pampanga Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, Sampang was arrested with two others on Sunday in a buy-bust operation on Bayabas Street, Dau Homesite, in Mabalacat.

Reportedly found in their possession were 14 sachets of suspected shabu weighing 54.81 grams, four P100 bills used as buy-bust money, one 9mm Glock pistol with 14 rounds of ammunition, and one Toyota Revo with plate number XBU-845.

But Sampang, in an interview, denied the allegations, saying he was only at the wrong place at the wrong time.

He was released by a prosecutor pending further investigation.

₱1 MORE STARTING AUG. 3

LTFRB OKs hike for air-con buses

BOY CABRIDO

DANCING FOUNTAIN

A girl is a picture of joy and fascination as she plays in the podium of the Market! Market! commercial center at The Fort in Taguig City. Market! Market! recently opened the floating dancing fountain which is fast becoming a popular attraction for shoppers.

By Clarissa Batino

METRO air-conditioned buses will charge passengers an additional P1 starting Aug. 3, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) said yesterday. Non-air-con buses in the provinces, on the other hand, will impose a P2.50 fare increase.

With this order, metro air-con buses already charging a minimum fare of P11 from the original P9 will have to roll back their fare.

The LTFRB yesterday issued the order allowing air-con buses in Metro Manila to increase their fares to P10 for the first five kilometers, and collect an additional P1.75 for every succeeding kilometer.

The order also puts to rest the question as to whether or not the fare of air-con buses in Metro Manila is deregulated.

Based on the LTFRB order setting a specific fare for the metro buses, the fare is not deregulated. Operators of these buses had long taken advantage of a vague transportation department order in 2002 saying that "the premium for air-conditioned services shall at least be 20 percent more than the fares authorized to regular services."

On July 7, the LTFRB directed metro air-con buses not to increase their fares without seeking the body's approval. It also cited a Supreme Court order saying that even bus fares of metro air-con units must be regulated.

"The board, through validated complaints, discovered that air-con bus fares in Metro Manila were 38 percent higher than non-air-con bus fares after the May 9 increase (for non-air-con metro buses), and 50 percent higher prior to the fare increase," said the LTFRB in its order.

The approved fare hike for metro air-con buses is 25 percent higher than the P8 minimum fare of regular buses. But the fare for every succeeding distance, at P1.75, is the same.

The LTFRB had earlier approved a P2 increase in minimum fares of jeepneys and non-air-con metro buses to P7.50 for the first four kilometers for jeepneys and P8 for the first five kilometers for buses. In approving the new rates, the LTFRB said it considered the surging diesel prices and the substantial increase in toll rates.

Provincial buses were allowed to increase their fares for the first five kilometers to P8.50, from P6. Every additional kilometer will be covered by a fare of P1.30 against the previous P1.10. The provincial fare hike was lower than the P3 or 50-percent increase in minimum fare sought by the Provincial Bus Operators Association of the Philippines. The order is scheduled for publication today and takes effect after 15 days, or on Aug. 3.

'Arroyo giving mothers a bad image'

By Tarra V. Quismundo

A DISGRACE to womanhood.

That was how women's groups described President Macapagal-Arroyo as they led a march of 1,500 demonstrators through the Makati Central Business District yesterday afternoon.

"Ms. Arroyo has degraded the image of the woman, of a female leader, because of her bad administration," said sectoral Rep. Liza Maza.

Maza added, "She has distorted the image of a mother, who should be one to teach her children to tell the truth always. But GMA (Arroyo) destroyed that."

Mothers carrying their babies, toddlers, students, female laborers, and members of urban poor groups, with a sprinkling of men from various militant groups, marched to Paseo de Roxas in the first gathering of the new anti-Arroyo women's alliance, Women's March or Women's Movement for Arroyo's Resignation and Regime Change.

The protest gathered members of Gabriela, women-members of Kilusang Mayo Uno, Anakpawis, People's Movement Against Poverty, Anakbayan and the League of Filipino Students, and students from St. Scholastica's College.

They were joined by members of the religious sector, including nuns and yellow-clad members of evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva's Bangon Kababaihan.

Sandra Cam, who linked Arroyo's husband Jose Miguel Arroyo and her brother-in-law Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo to "jueteng," spoke to the crowd.

Just as the women wrapped up their rally, another anti-Arroyo coalition marched with their torches around the Ayala triangle.

The Solidarity of Unions and Labor Organizations for New Government, a newly forged broad-based alliance of 10 labor centers, took to the streets at nightfall to call for the dismantling of the government and the establishment of a transitional government.

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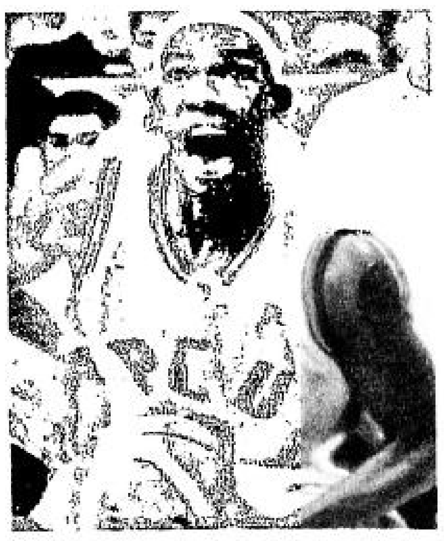
Dolphins look to Espinas for No. 6

DO-IT-ALL Gabby Espinas will try to lead the Philippine Christian U Dolphins to their sixth straight victory when they battle the St. Benilde Blazers in the NCAA basketball tournament at 2 p.m. today at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Attempting to keep pace with the defending champion Dolphins are the Letran Knights, who will clash with the Mapua Cardinals at 4 p.m.

Espinas, the 2004 Most Valuable Player and Rookie of the Year, is coming off another big game. In the Dolphins' recent 57-49 triumph over the Cardinals, Espinas delivered 11 points, 12 rebounds, three steals and three blocks.


ESPINAS: Back in MVP form.

The numbers no longer surprise new coach Junel Baculi, who was also glad to note the changes in the Dolphins' brand of play.

"Last year, they're an offensive-minded team," said Baculi. "We're now tilting the balance, turning them into a more defensive team."

Knights coach Louie Alas also pointed out the improvement in his squad.

"We're playing better defense," said Alas. "The players' attitude defensively is starting to show."

STANDINGS	W	L
PCU	5	0
Letran	5	0
Mapua	4	1
Benilde	3	2
SSC	3	3
Perpetual	1	5
San Beda	1	5
JRU	0	6

The Knights, who last held a 5-0 start during their title run in 1998, blasted the Blazers, 65-45, last Friday.

Sophomore 6-foot-7 center Mark Andaya dominated the paint for the Knights, finishing with 15 points, 12 rebounds and five blocks.

Meanwhile, coach Horacio Lim isn't a bit worried that the Cardinals' four-game winning run ended last Friday against the Dolphins.

"We're facing teams that are much stronger and taller than us," said Lim, noting that Mapua is wrapping up the first round against top contenders PCU, Letran and St. Benilde.

"These are tough games. But the pressure is on them, not on us. If we could ambush one or two teams, that's fine with me."

The Blazers, too, will try to get into the groove again after dropping their last two matches. *Jasmine W. Payo*

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La Salle formalizes UAAP protest

CONTROVERSY is brewing early in the UAAP tournament.

The UAAP technical committee will meet today after La Salle board representative Danny Jose filed a formal protest late Monday over alleged non-calls on goal-tending violations in the Archers' disputed game against the University of the East Warriors.

The Warriors narrowly beat the Archers, 57-56, last Sunday, but Jose cited two instances of goal tending in the game.

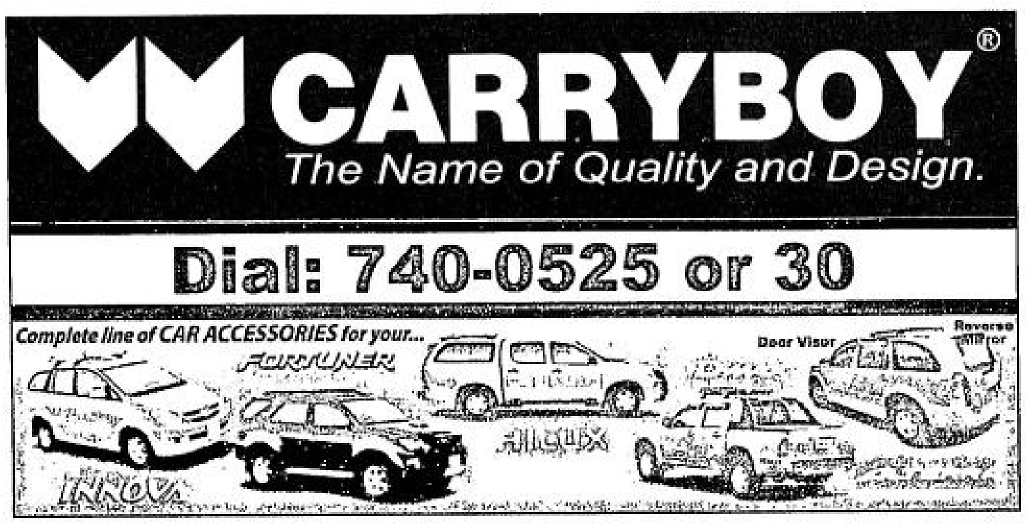
Ateneo's Ricky Palou heads the technical committee, whose members include University of Santo Tomas' Fr. Ermita de Sagon, Adamson's Ricardo Matibag, University of the Philippines' Kiko Diaz, La Salle's Ramoncito Campos and UE's Rolando Perez.

League commissioner Joe Lipa will make recommendations.

Jose said there were goal tending violations on OJ Cua's basket in the second quarter and on Cholo Villanueva's shot near the end of the third period.

Technical head Romy Guevarra, however, explained right after the game that the alleged non-calls "did not decide the outcome" and "La Salle still had the chance to win it until the final buzzer."

The loss was the Archers' second straight after an opening day rout of fierce rival Ateneo for a 1-2 record. *Jasmine W. Payo*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RP jins bag 4 medals

CHUNCHEON, South Korea—Four members of the Petron national taekwondo team, led by Dax Alberto Morfe, bagged a medal each in the prestigious 5th Korea Open Chuncheon Taekwondo International Championships here recently.

Morfe copped a silver medal while Athens Olympic veterans Tshomlee Go and Mary Antoinette Rivero and Esther Marie Singson captured a bronze each.

Philippine Taekwondo Association president Robert N. Aventajado praised Morfe and company. "We're proud of them. They did well considering the tough, world-class competition."

On the other hand, national training director Stephen Fernandez said it was "a good opportunity to check the performance level of our players so we can prepare them better for the Southeast Asian Games (in Manila) this November."

The Petron national team members are undergoing a tough military survival course at the Philippine Marines Center in Ternate, Cavite, as part of their preparation for the 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

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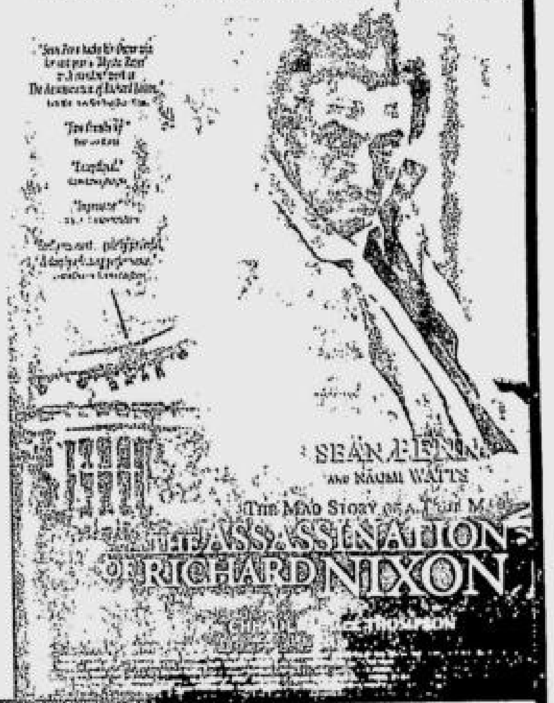
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Hot-shooting Tribu Sugbu five rips Spring

MINGLANILLA, Cebu—Defending champion Tribu Sugbu crushed Spring Cooking Oil-backed Laguna, 82-66, Sunday to tie idle Ozamiz Cotta for the Southern Conference lead in the 2005 Panasonic-NBC national basketball championship at the Sports Center here.

The Skygo/Sirlitz-supported Cebuanos of businessmen Lito Gillamac and Mario King shot 8-of-16 from the 3-point territory to snap the Cooking Oil Masters' two-game winning run while extending their unbeaten mark at home to 16-0 dating back to last season.

Doroteo Almacin made five triples while Alex Cainglet added three to power Tribu to a 47-36 second-quarter lead which the Laguna squad of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro failed to surmount.

Tribu's seventh victory in nine games enabled it to catch leader Ozamiz in the tournament supported by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Spring Cooking Oil, Accel, Molten, Nature's Spring, Far Eastern Insurance, Skygo Motorcycles, Sirlitz, Hapee Toothpaste, Dewfoam, KSK Food Products (Boy Bawang), Bayview Park Hotel and Holiday Plaza-Cebu.

Laguna (3-3) faced another tough opponent in Mantawi last night at the Mandaue Sports center.

Tribu and Spring fought evenly in the first quarter which ended at 18-18. But the Cebuanos pulled away in the second quarter, when Almacin and Cainglet waxed hot from beyond the arc.

Almacin finished with 19 points, four rebounds, one steal and two blocks.

Spring's new recruits—Dondon Villamin and Mel Latoreno—did not help much since they were still adjusting to coach Vic Sanchez's plays.

The scores:

TRIBU 82—Almacin 19, Raneses 14, Cainglet 10, Guerrero 8, Mercado 7, Ursal 6, Briones 6, Bucao 4, Binongo 4, Luga 2, Paglinawan 2, Ferraren 0, Mangubat, Pening 0.

LAGUNA 66—Manuel 12, Domingo 10, Reyes 9, Villamin 8, Corbin 8, Kalaw 6, Latoreno 4, Manucat 3, Mallari 2, Nuqui 2, Mendoza 2, Proceso 2, Alejar 0, Vivero 0.

Quarters: 18-18, 51-39, 63-53, 82-66

Shell five's fate hangs in the air

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

STILL hurting from the officiating controversy in the recently concluded PBA Gran Matador Fiesta Cup, Shell Governor Bobby Kanapi felt he was dealt another blow when the board speculated on the fate of his team in its last meeting and the story came out in the papers.

Bobby K was not in that meeting. In fact, he has been incommunicado since the referee fiasco.

After the meeting, he suddenly materialized, spewing fire and brimstone. Bobby K did not like the fact that the board had discussed and argued about what to do with his team in his absence and even before he could give official notice of his ballclub's plan of action.

At the height of his fury, Bobby K threatened to launch a full blown investigation to find out who had leaked the minutes of the meeting to the press. Shell had an understanding with the board and the PBA commissioner's office that no information regarding the status of the team would be discussed with media. Bobby K demanded to know who broke the cabal.

* * *

Truth is, nobody really knows what will happen to Shell, perhaps even Bobby K himself.

I just learned yesterday from a Shell insider that Bobby had gathered the players and the coaching staff last week, to discuss the possibilities.

There were three possible scenarios, he told the group.

One is that the team will stay active for at least one more season. This was the appeal from the board which Bobby had forwarded to Shell's head office; two, that the Shell franchise would be sold ; and three, if neither of the first two happens, there will be no other recourse but to disband the team, in which case a dispersal draft will take place soon after.

This last item sparked a heated argument in the last board meeting, with Alaska's Joaqui Trillo proposing that the dislocated Shell players be sold instead .

Joaqui's proposal was eventually shot down, but not before some exchange of harsh words.

The last I heard, the board had agreed to put the Turbochargers into a dispersal pool and would be drafted through lottery and not ranking. That is, if Shell eventually folds up.

* * *

I realized how popular badminton has become in this country when calls, e-mails, and fax messages flooded the PDI Sports desk to correct an item I wrote in this column. World mixed doubles champion Nathan Robertson, they said, plays with a Carlton racket, which he endorses, and not a Yonex, as a top communications exec told me during opening day of the MVP Cup. We regret the error.

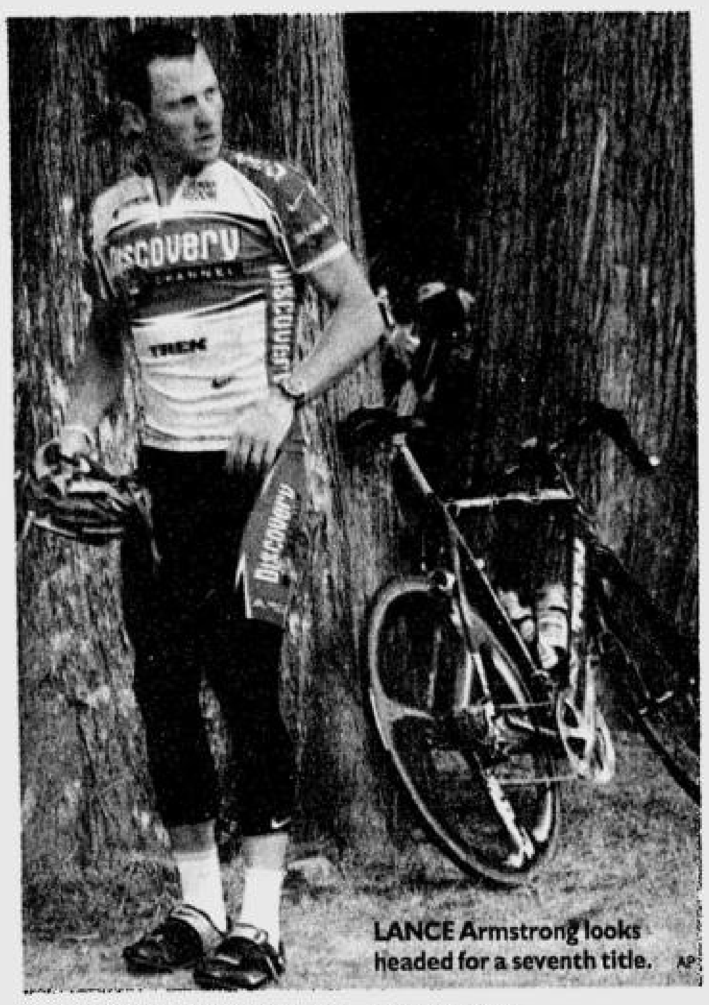
* * *

The turnout at the San Miguel Beer victory celebration was so huge it could put the political rallies to shame. Fiends, fans, media and San Miguel officers and staff were all there. Even Kris Aquino, who roots for a sister team, graced the occasion held at the SMC complex in Pasig last Friday.

Rivals admit: It's over

Armstrong already 'impossible to beat'

PAU, France—Lance Armstrong's closest rival says there is no way to stop the American from winning a seventh straight Tour de France title.



LANCE Armstrong looks headed for a seventh title. AP

Heading into Tuesday's 16th stage of the Tour de France, Armstrong holds a nearly three-minute lead over his closest challengers, who have less than a week left.

"It's not possible to beat him," second-placed Ivan Basso said Monday as riders rested in Pau. "I have done all I can."

Basso is 2 minutes, 46 seconds behind Armstrong. With a time trial on the penultimate day—Armstrong's specialty—Basso needs to make significant gains in the four stages before that for an improbable comeback.

Basso's Team CSC director, Bjarne Riis, sounded resigned to defeat.

"He (Armstrong) has class, strength and talent. It's not easy to beat someone like that," Riis said.

Tuesday's 180.5-kilometer (112.2-mile) stage from Mourenx to Pau is the last tough mountain route of the Tour, before riders head through the Massif Central area of France on their way to the finish in Paris.

Armstrong's team director, Johan Bruyneel, remains cautious about Tuesday's trek, which features the Col de Marie-Blanque, a category one climb, and the Col d'Aubisque, a harder ascent which does not have a rating. It rises for 16.5 km (10 miles) at a 7-percent gradient.

"It's a difficult stage. The last climb is tough, and pretty far from the finish," Bruyneel said.

The Discovery Channel riders have had two bad days so far on the Tour. However, both times Armstrong did not lose any time to his rivals.

Jan Ullrich, the 1997 Tour winner seen as Armstrong's biggest threat, trails by 5:58 and Alexandre Vinokourov by 9:38.

Following Tuesday's mountain stage is a flat route from Pau to Revel which is a potential hazard as sprinters will be nervously jostling for position as they contend for the overall green jersey title.

Armstrong is wary of such stages as there is a greater risk of an accident.

"You never know, you go to a village and take a turn too fast and break your collarbone. Tour de France over," he said. *AP*

2 Davao bets seize Streetball final slots

TEAM Davao fashioned out a pair of victories on Sunday to top the seniors and girls divisions and clinch two berths in the national finals of the adidas Streetball Challenge at the NCCC Mall Atrium.

Ateneo de Davao took the juniors plum and Team Big Mac of Cagayan de Oro topped the midgets side to also advance to the national finals slated July 30-31 at the Festival Mall in Alabang.

Barangay Ma-A of Team Davao pulled off a 20-17 victory over Team Zamboanga's Barangay Talon-Talo to capture the seniors crown at the close of the adidas Streetball Challenge Mindanao finals.

Carlo Legaspi fired nine points for the Hubert Paz-mentored Team Davao, which thumped Team Magic of Barangay Lubogan, 17-6, in the Davao elims to advance to the regional finals. Other scorers for Team Davao were Dexter Ansaldo, Aaron Medina and Lexter Ansaldo, who had 6, 3 and 2 points, respectively.

Evart John Zambo and Darwin Cordero combined for 15 points for Team Zamboanga.

Earlier, Team Davao's UM cagebelles beat Team Grudge of Rizal Memorial Colleges, 14-10, in the Davao qualifiers of the event copresented by Globe Gentxt and backed by McDonald's, Cherifer Multivitamins, Snickers chocolate bar, Coppertone, adidas fragrance and body care, Blue Angel alcohol, Milo, Powerade, Viva Mineral Water, adidas eyewear and Yehey.com.

Team Nirvana of Ateneo de Davao held off Team Vienna of Holy Child School of Davao, 16-12, to cop the juniors crown.

Team Big Mac of City Government of Cagayan de Oro beat Team Quarter Pounder of Ateneo de Davao, 13-10, to cop the midgets title.

Samsung interscholastic golf under way in Cebu

RAW talents down south get the chance to shine as they vie for division honors starting today in the Samsung Interscholastic golf championships, the series' first out-of-town sortie at the Cebu Country Club in Cebu City.

Eighty-three players have registered for the tournament, the first half of two Interscholastic competitions sponsored by Samsung as part of its efforts to help prepare young golfers for tougher competitions.

Seeing action are at least 83 players from various schools in Cebu and Bacolod, including Sacred Heart Jesuit, Springdale, San Carlos, La Salle Bacolod, Bethany, CIE, Bright Academy, St. Benedict, Cebu Eastern and CIS.

They will contend for the high school and elementary team titles as well as the individual titles for both categories, according to Boy Blue Ocampo of the organizing Professional Sports Management Group Inc.

Jovi Neri, junior golf coordinator in Cebu, said the event is a big shot in the arm for jungolf in the south.

"We've been waiting for quite sometime now and we're glad that Samsung is doing it for our school kids here," said Neri.

The Molave scoring system will be used for the tournament also supported by Tokyo Tokyo, KZG, Coppertone Sport, Srixon, Philippine Airlines as the official carrier, Sunbolt, Rudy Project, C-Lium Fiber and Sports Plus. Media partners are Wave 89.1, Jam 88.3, 89.9, 99.5 RT, 103.5 K-Lite and Killer Bee.

Meralco shuttlers in electrifying win

MERALCO stamped its class over Slazenger, 5-0, last Monday to lead the opening-day winners in the classic division of the 2005 Sportshouse-Carlton Corporate and Celebrity Cup Invitational Badminton tournament at the Club 650 in Quezon City.

Criselda Saracho, Flor Vivas, Vangie Escall, Geralyn Solidum, Boy Morales, Allan Dilla, Reynaldo Selga and Sharon Deloso lifted Meralco in this event sponsored by Ratsky's, Quantum Global, Philippine Star, SM Supermalls and INQUIRER Badminton Monthly.

Other results:

Classic: PLDT d. Manila Bulletin, 5-0; San Miguel-Coke Export d. 3M Phils., 5-0; Celestron d. Panasonic, 4-1; and PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER d. Pagcor Sports, 3-2.

Masters: 105.1 Crossover-Alabang d. IBC-13, 5-0; San Miguel-Powerade d. Dunlop Sports, 5-0; Celestron d. Technomarine-Ateneo, 4-1; Philippine Star d. Advance Solutions, 3-2.

Top artists lend a hand to Asean Para Games

PREPARATIONS are proceeding as scheduled for the country's hosting of the 3rd Asean Para Games on Dec. 14-21, with organizers focusing on marketing the event featuring persons with disabilities.

This Friday, a promotions event will be launched at the Casino Filipino in Parañaque, with souvenir items like figurines of mascots in various sports to be sold to supporters and friends of the Para Games.

The souvenir items are designed by Gerald Raymundo, a wheelchair-bound artist who has lent a hand to the fund-raising activities drawn up by organizers.

Proceeds of the event, backed by Johnny Walker, will cover costs for the country's hosting chores.

The Games has also drawn the support of world-famous Lea Salonga who has agreed to record the theme song entitled "The Power of My Dream." The song, a product of a collaboration among award-winning musical arrangers and songwriters, including Lani Macaraeg, Joey Reyes, Marvin Querido and Gerard Salonga, is expected to be launched next month.

"We are very glad that Lea and other big names in the music industry are helping us in this endeavor," said Asean Para Games Organizing Committee chair Michael Barredo.

SPORTSWATCH

As-Pac Bronco meet all set in Marikina

IT'S ALL systems go for the Asia Pacific Zone Bronco Baseball Championship and the Pan Pacific Junior Baseball Games at the Sto. Niño baseball grounds in Marikina City. Rodolfo "Boy" Tingzon, president of the Philippine Tot Baseball Foundation, made the announcement during yesterday's PSA Forum at the Pantalan Restaurant in Manila. The Asia Pacific event is scheduled on July 22 to 26 while the Pan Pacific event is lined up on Aug. 12 to 16. Competing in the first event are teams from Japan, Chinese Taipei, the Philippines and the host city. The RP team is made up of a selection of boys from Metro Manila and nearby cities while Marikina City, being the host, was given the right to field a team. Tingzon hailed Marikina City Mayor Maria Lourdes Fernando for her continued support in sports. "This is a great opportunity for Filipinos to see how world-class baseball is played in their respective age groups," said Fernando.

Pasay Anniversary derby round 2 today

FIERCE cockfighting action resumes today in Pasay City Cockpit's 19th PCC Anniversary 5-Cock Derby second round eliminations. Ninety-seven cockers and breeders from different provinces saw action in last Monday's opening round of the derby sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Among the 18 pacesetters with two wins each were Lyndon Malicay, Teves Brothers, Mauro Prieto, Gov. Ito Yñares and Marlon Montelibano. They get P15,000 each. Those who will emerge as champions on July 22 will win P1 million. Participants with three straight wins share in the P100,000 prize. For inquiries, call 8431890, 8431746 or 8166750.

Pahabol sa Taglugon 4-cocker Aug. 8

THE PAHABOL sa Tag-Lugon 4-Cock Derby will be held at the Makati Coliseum Derby Center on Aug. 8 with a guaranteed prize of P300,000 for an entry fee of P10,000. Now on its 18th year, the Bobbit Pies-hosted event is supported by Grower Maintenance Pellets, a maintenance feed from Sarimanok—makers of Thunderbird Power Feeds. Call 8956475 or 8963545. Meanwhile, screening for the Ika-10th Taon na Palaban 6-Stag Derby started last Saturday. Call Shirley, Noemi or Tiling at 8512275, 8331638, 8529812 or (0920) 9509293.

PBA chair has a cure for indigestion

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

IT'S quite easy to like the new PBA chairman.

Quiet, mild Ely Capacio is a maker of flavors whose healthy offerings sit well with all kinds of customers.

A self-made executive, Capacio has been successful both on the basketball court and in the front office.

The guy has a lot of heart and drive.

Those are clear win-win assets. But he'll need more than these terrific ingredients in trying to do an entirely new, complicated dish.

Declared the new PBA Board chair: "Now that we're in this capacity to help the PBA, we want the games to be filled to the rafters."

* * *

Capacio is a born optimist. But he himself knows that winning back fans to the PBA is easier said than done.

OK. He had known the days when a PBA diehard would not think twice before running to the old basketball mecca.

There were ready, relevant thrills practically every playing day, much more during the finals phase, when ringside tickets were hard to avail of even in the black market.

Remember the mad, mad seasons of the Crispa-Toyota rivalry when fans themselves engaged in fierce feuds and sided with either team as though their tribal existence depended solely on who would be the dominant ballclub?

The old PBA just could not serve enough of the well-loved dish. Fans kept coming back, clamoring for more.

* * *

The golden seasons of great, memorable PBA games are gone.

Gone too were the roaring hordes who used to devour the main fare.

The PBA, based on very poor attendance, has obviously been stricken off the list of favorite after-office destinations.

This could only be blamed on the menu.

If they had offered a few good games, all these were obliterated by unpalatable events.

There was an abundance of drug cases, fake Fil-Ams, TROs, dull matches on the PBA menu.

If to a restaurant clientele, most of those who bothered to go to the PBA often left suffering from indigestion.

* * *

Naturally, Ely Capacio is honestly convinced they've to reform the food list in order to save the league.

"I was there when the arenas were full," Capacio told a young interviewer over the weekend.

The young reporter pictured Capacio as a savior, a rare breed.

He never played either high school or college ball, but he was remembered as part of the supporting cast that helped give Tanduay twin championships, the Reinforced and All-Filipino, in 1986.

He was assistant coach to Turo Valenzona who steered Tanduay to the 1987 PBA Open title.

Capacio later coached Purefoods that won the All-Filipino championship in 1991.

"I never thought of myself as a great player or coach," he told Dominic Menor of the Bulletin Today. "What really drove me was the motivation to prove critics wrong."

Capacio said there were many doubters who had thought he could not do it.

Now, he's there as chair of the strong PBA Board, the first former pro league player to occupy the post.

* * *

So what are his plans in reforming the PBA menu?

No reply. Capacio just smiled his old, shy smile.

Meanwhile, main cogs in the PBA Commissioner's Office, led by big boss Noli Eala, were reported to be at Clark yesterday for a brainstorming session.

It's too early to say whether the menu they would prepare for the next season would jibe with what Capacio has in mind.

At least, Capacio has already expressed his fervent wish: an overhaul in the PBA main fare.

Does Capacio have the win-win formula?

It's hard to tell. Look, it's easy to like Ely Capacio, but it's no longer easy to say something nice about the PBA.

But, at least with Capacio's great background, we can be sure nobody would go home from a PBA game suffering from poisoning.

Sandra Bullock weds Jesse James

SOLVANG, California—Actress Sandra Bullock married mechanic and reality TV star Jesse James at a ranch near Santa Barbara, according to reports.

Bullock, 40, and James, 35, exchanged vows Saturday in front of several hundred guests at the Folded Hills Ranch in Santa Ynez Valley's wine country.

Guests included actor William Shatner, actresses Jamie Lee Curtis and Regina King, and Metallica lead singer James Hetfield, according to "Entertainment Tonight" and Us Weekly magazine.

Many in Hollywood have been surprised at the pairing of the tattooed bad boy James and the on-screen good girl Bullock. They met in 2003.

It's the first marriage for "Miss Congeniality" star Bullock, who had been engaged to actor Tate Donovan. She recently played the wife of a district attorney in the film "Crash."

James, who previously married twice and has three children, appears on The Discovery Channel's "Monster Garage." *AP*

MISS Congeniality marries bad boy James. AP

'Charlie' tops US box office

LOS ANGELES—Willy Wonka gave moviegoers their sugar fix for the weekend.

"Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," starring Johnny Depp as candyman Wonka, had a sweet debut of $55.4 million, helping Hollywood make a dent in a box-office downturn that has lingered most of the year.

Opening as a solid No. 2 was Owen Wilson and Vince Vaughn's comedy "Wedding Crashers," which took in $32.2 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

"Charlie" marked Depp's biggest opening ever, surpassing the $46.6-million debut for his 2003 blockbuster "Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at North American theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc.

1. "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," $55.4 million
2. "Wedding Crashers," $32.2 million
3. "Fantastic Four," $22.7 million
4. "War of the Worlds," $15 million
5. "Batman Begins," $5.6 million

AP

Jed Madela in H'wood tilt for RP

SINGER Jed Madela is representing the Philippines in a singing competition in Hollywood.

Two years ago, Madela bagged the silver trophy, the People's Choice Award and Best Voice of Asia Male Singer of the Year prize at the Voice of Asia Song Festival in Kazakhstan, where he joined contestants from 18 Asian countries.

This time around, Madela is competing with over 40 contenders from seven continents. The weeklong festival dubbed "2005 World Championships of the Performing Arts (WCOPA)" is set from Aug. 3 to 16. This is the first time the Philippines is sending a representative to the contest, which is on its ninth year.

Madela's Hollywood trip is sponsored by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

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8 [illegible] NEW POLICE STORY
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3:50 / 4:40 / 6:00 / 6:40
7:20 / 8:40 / 9:30 / 10:00
HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30
THE EVIL DEAD
1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50
WAR OF THE WORLDS
1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:40
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THE ISLAND
1:20 / 4:00 / 6:40 / 9:20

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① THE ISLAND
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② NEW POLICE STORY
12:00 / 2:50 / 5:40 / 8:30
③ FANTASTIC FOUR
11:50 / 2:05 / 4:20 / 6:35 / 8:50
④ WAR OF THE WORLDS
12:30 / 3:10 / 5:50 / 8:30
⑤ THE EVIL DEAD
12:05 / 2:15 / 4:25 / 6:35 / 8:45
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ARANETA COLISEUM EVENTS
July 21, 23, 28, 30 & 31 UAAP GAMES
10 am / 12 nn / 2 pm / 4 pm
JOHN MAXWELL ASIAN TOUR 2005
July 22, Friday 6:00 pm
UAAP - NCAA ALL STAR GAMES
August 13, Saturday
CUSA BASKETBALL LEAGUE
August 26, Friday OPENING GAMES

CENTER EVENTS
SALE EVENTS: *Freeway, Solo and Barbizon & Sassa at Ali Mall; Cumbia, Rustan's Department Store, Mossimo, Marithe & Francois Girbaud, Bass, LA Gear, Lacoste Footwear, Orange Juice, Folded & Hung, Bayo and Arrow at Gateway Mall*
PERFORMANCES: *UPLJE with Skarlet, Chedi & Mon David on July 22, 23 & 24 at the Gateway Roxas Tunnel*

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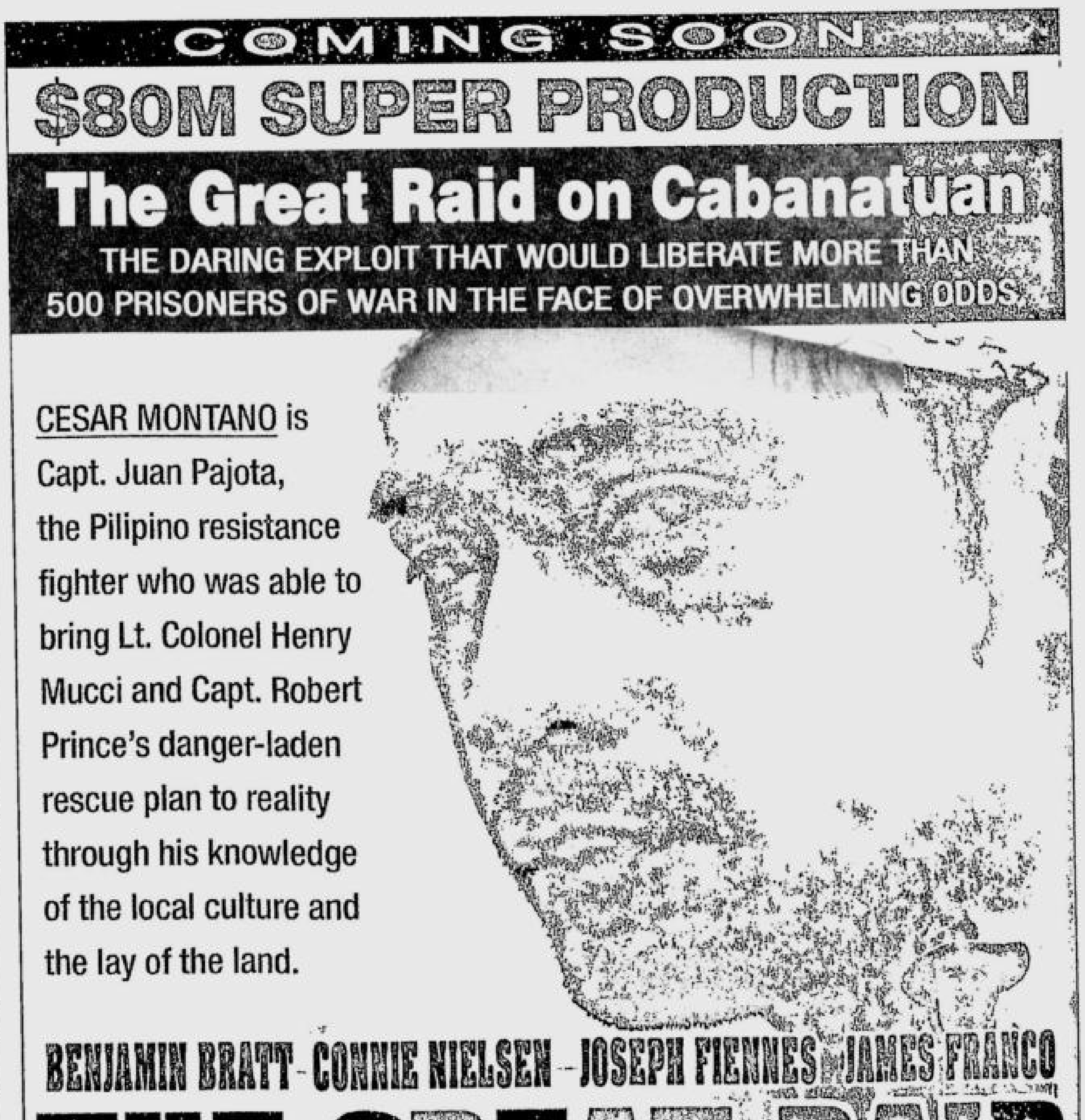

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CESAR MONTANO is Capt. Juan Pajota, the Pilipino resistance fighter who was able to bring Lt. Colonel Henry Mucci and Capt. Robert Prince's danger-laden rescue plan to reality through his knowledge of the local culture and the lay of the land.

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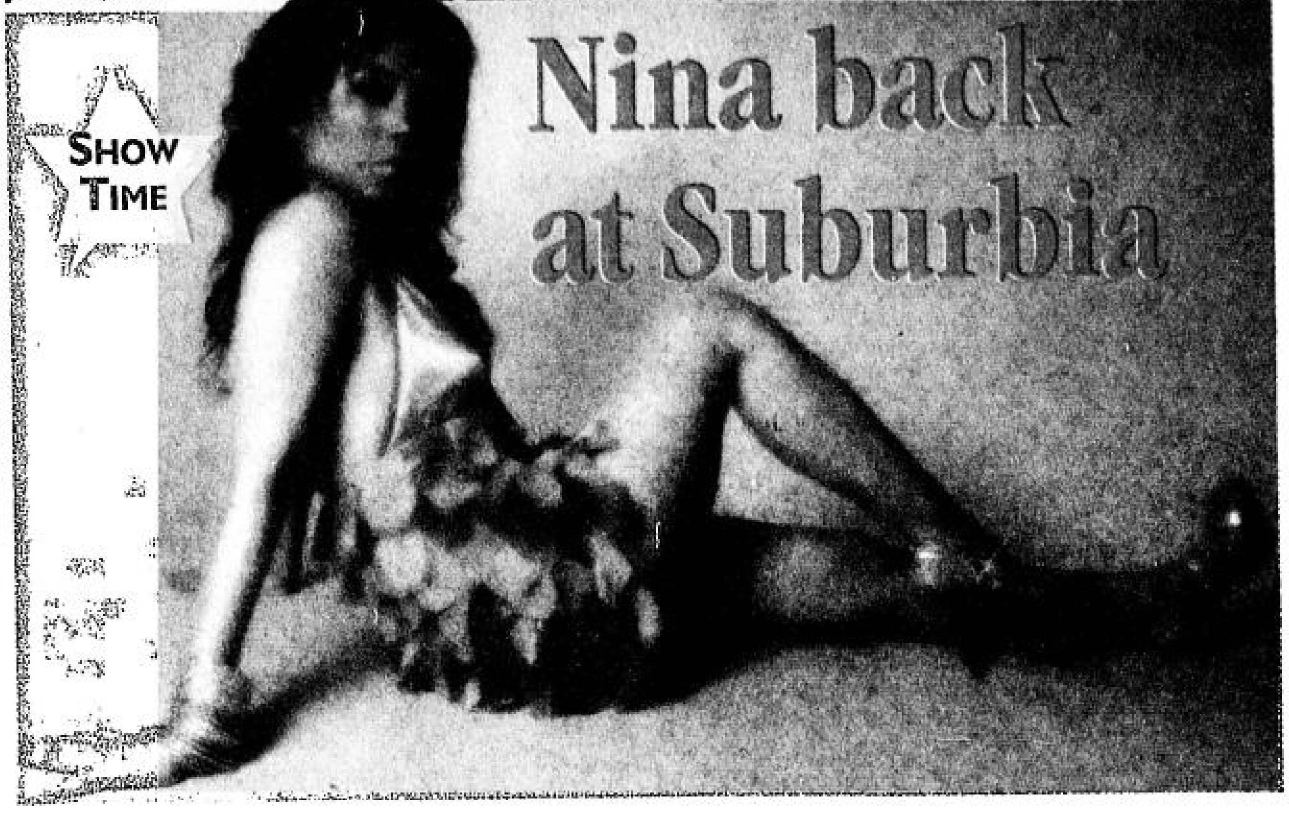
SHOW TIME

Nina back at Suburbia



NINA repeats her successful show, "Soul Siren @ Suburbia Bar" on July 28.

She will perform cuts from her latest 19-track album, "Nina Live!"

Call 811-0725 or 410-1685.

July 20

"Follies de Mwah!" at Club Mwah! Call 535-7943.

Side A at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Twisted Pair at Suburbia

Maila Andresat the Pan Pacific Hotel

Silk at Fiesta San Miguel Dusit Hotel Nikko

July 21

"Follies de Mwah!" at Club Mwah! Call 535-7943.

Reuben Laurente of The CompanY at the Hard Rock Café

Wiseguys at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Restrospect and Keystone at Suburbia

Kearney Street at Fiesta San Miguel Dusit Hotel Nikko

July 22

Mitch Valdes in A Rockin' Comedy concert at the Captain's Bar, Mandarin Oriental Manila.

"Spectaculo," a dinner, magic, dance and full production show at Club Mwah! starting at 7 p.m. Call 535-7943.

Rhythm and Babes at Hyatt Regency's Calesa Bar, 10 p.m.

Fat Session at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Jimmy Bondoc and Pseudonymz at Suburbia

Maila Andres at the Hyatt Hotel

K24/7and Passage at Fiesta San Miguel Dusit Hotel Nikko

July 23

Mitch Valdes in A Rockin' Comedy concert at the Captain's Bar, Mandarin Oriental Manila.

"Spectaculo," a dinner, magic, dance and full production show at Club Mwah! starting at 7 p.m. Call 535-7943.

Escape at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Mike Chan at Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall

July 24

Nyoy Volante with Mannos at Starmall Edsa, 5 p.m.

John Prats, Pokwang, Jhong Hilario and Archie Alemania in the promo tour of their movie, "D Anothers" at the Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall

July 25

Freestyle at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Zyncxation at Suburbia

Maila Andres at the Diwata Lounge of the Sulu Hotel

Route 70 at Fiesta San Miguel Dusit Hotel Nikko

July 26

"Follies de Mwah!" at Club Mwah! Call 535-7943.

The CompanY at Merk's

Freeverse at Suburbia

Nyoy Volante with Mannos at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

A4, composed of Dyords Javier, Pinky Marquez, Isay Alvarez and Bimbo Cerrudo, at Strumms Makati

Maila Andresat the Casino Lounge of the Hyatt Hotel

Mocha with Spin Art at Fiesta San Miguel Dusit Hotel Nikko

Spirit of '67 at the Captain's Bar of the Mandarin Oriental

July 27

"Follies de Mwah!" at Club Mwah! Call 535-7943.

Side A at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Twisted Pair at Suburbia

Maila Andres at the Pan Pacific Hotel

Silk at Fiesta San Miguel Dusit Hotel Nikko

July 28

"Follies de Mwah!" at Club Mwah! Call 535-7943.

Wiseguys at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

SIDE A at Tavern on the Square

NYOY Volante

Reuben Laurente of The CompanY at the Hard Rock Café

Kearney Street at Fiesta San Miguel Dusit Hotel Nikko

July 29

MTV Right to Royalty Concert at The Fort Open Field, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig. The concert will feature Apo Hiking Society, Kuh Ledesma, Nina, Joey Ayala, Paolo Santos, Side A, True Faith, Jay-R and many more.

"Spectaculo," a dinner, magic, dance and full production show at Club Mwah! starting at 7 p.m. Call 535-7943.

Rhythm and Babes at Hyatt Regency's Calesa Bar, 10 p.m.

Fat Session at Tavern on the Square

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FANTASTIC FOUR
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CAMPUS GHOST STORY
HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
9 THE ISLAND
10 THE ISLAND
NEW POLICE STORY
12 EVIL DEAD

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3 CREEP
4 FANTASTIC FOUR
5 NEW POLICE STORY
6 WAR OF THE WORLDS
7 THE ISLAND
8 HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
9 IF ONLY
10 CAMPUS GHOST STORY
11 BATMAN BEGINS
12 EVIL DEAD

SM NORTH EDSA
FANTASTIC FOUR
THE ISLAND
3 IF ONLY
HEBIE: FULLY LOADED
5 NEW POLICE STORY
6 WAR OF THE WORLDS
CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
8 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

SM CITY MANILA
NEW POLICE STORY
2 FANTASTIC FOUR
HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
4 THE ISLAND
5 WAR OF THE WORLDS
THE ISLAND
EVIL DEAD
8 MONSTER-IN-LAW
CAMPUS GHOST STORY
10 CREEP
11 MR. & MRS. SMITH
12 IF ONLY

SM CITY STA MESA
FANTASTIC FOUR
2 WAR OF THE WORLDS
THE ISLAND
NEW POLICE STORY
5 THE ISLAND
EVIL DEAD
HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
8 ICE PRINCESS
IF ONLY
10 BATMAN BEGINS

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4 FANTASTIC FOUR
5 CAMPUS GHOST STORY
IF ONLY
MR. & MRS. SMITH
8 HERBIE: FULLY LOADED
9 WAR OF THE WORLDS
10 EVIL DEAD

SM SAN LAZARO
THE ISLAND
2 EVIL DEAD
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FANTASTIC FOUR

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THE ISLAND
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3 IF ONLY
4 FANTASTIC FOUR

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THE ISLAND
2 CREEP
3 FANTASTIC FOUR
4 WAR OF THE WORLDS
CAMPUS GHOST STORY
6 NEW POLICE STORY

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1 THE ISLAND
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THE ISLAND
MONSTER-IN-LAW
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NEW POLICE STORY

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3 FANTASTIC FOUR
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THE ISLAND
SIN CITY
PINOY BLONDE
FANTASTIC FOUR

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THE ISLAND
4 FANTASTIC FOUR

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HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY
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3 WAR OF THE WORLDS
4 PINOY BLONDE
5 FANTASTIC FOUR
6 THE ISLAND
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WAR OF THE WORLDS
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DID YOU KNOW...

Bubble Gang mainstay **Maureen Larrazabal** was seen shopping with a companion recently at Glorietta 2 in Makati. She looked very sexy in a white tube dress.

Why first features are generally overwrought

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THESE past few months, we have been viewing more than our usual number of movies by first-time filmmakers. After practically every screening, some of our colleagues approach us with questions about the films we've viewed.

Why, they usually ask, are movie directors' first feature sometimes (often?) so long, overwritten, declarative and unfocused. They could have done a lot better by doing less, so what's with this tendency to over-write, overstate and over-direct?

Our answer is only half-facetious: We say, "first-time filmmakers do and say too much because many of them have been waiting a long time to finally direct a full-length movie, so, what they want to say has been building and piling up for years, hence the surfeit of material, themes, insights, etc.

"Also, they aren't sure if they will get follow-up offers to make their second or third movies. Therefore, they tend to put everything they want to say about everything that interests and concerns them in the first full-length feature."

If other new filmmakers think there's some truth to this observation, they could use it as a cautionary warning before they conceptualize and shoot their own debut movies.

What adjustments should they make? First, they should be more optimistic about their future prospects, and expect to make not just one film, but several. So, they should consciously delimit the themes of their initial production to only a few of the issues they're concerned about.

They should also remind themselves that, while their debut film should be a showcase for what they can do (to interest producers in hiring them for other projects), they shouldn't overload it with all the tricks and shticks they can muster, for fear of overwhelming or confounding those very producers they seek to impress.

> First-time filmmakers could say a lot more by doing less. What's with this tendency to over-write, over-state and over-direct?

Just realize the requirements and possibilities of this one, specific movie story, and let it go at that, OK?

Truth to tell, most producers don't want to be beaten over the head with the club of overly eager talent. They "just" want to see glimmers of promise, an astute directorial eye, a sense of focus and tempo, the ability to tell an affecting story with the camera, the knack for casting the right actors and motivating them to come up with felt performances, a good work ethic, the discipline to stay within budget, and the ability to communicate well with the movie audience!

It would also help if the new filmmaker wouldn't be such an obvious copycat, pilfering visualization styles and even plagiarizing pages of somebody else's screenplay, just to make a great first impression. So, keep it simple and focused—and honest.

Let's hope that new filmmakers take these notes to heart, so their first efforts at feature-film directing won't be as predictably overwrought as some others' works have been.

Aside from resulting in greater success, this approach will also enable them to unveil their abilities sequentially, rather than in one fell swoop, and thus prevent them from repeating themselves and becoming instant have-beens too early in the game.

Pre-departure briefing

TO HELP first-time visitors understand quaint everyday expressions in the United Kingdom and learn about living and studying in England, the British Council will present a pre-departure briefing called "Welcome to the UK," from 2-5 p.m., from July 25 to 27, and Aug. 1 to 4. Venue is the British Council office at Taipan Place, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas. A specialized seminar for students will be held on July 25, 26 and Aug. 1 and 2. The briefing will cover a range of topics—British culture, lifestyle, climate, housing, cost of living, visa application, basic UK laws, how to adjust to the new environment, etc. Call 9141011 to 14.

Movies on TV

ON HBO today at 6:30 a.m., "The Goodbye Girl," 8:15 a.m., "The House of Usher," 9 p.m., "Coming to America."

On Cinemax today at 9:15 a.m., "Ghost," 1:15 p.m., "Flashdance."

On Star Movies today "Father of the Bride." In this **hilarious update**, Steve Martin turns in a winning performance as the befuddled father who has a hard time letting go of his daughter (**Kimberly Williams**) when she unexpectedly announces her plans to wed. **Martin Short** lights up the screen as the of-the-wall wedding consultant.

Feedback

THEATER luminary **Isabel Sevilla-Soriano** writes: "We use our minds and hearts. Our hearts are broken, but our minds are whole, steady and clear... GMA is constitutionally still the president. Our Asian selves must accept this, not insist that with the loss of some trust and respect, we must change. This is not a marriage of true selves; it is the growth of a people that should hold back self-esteem, and build on historical greatness. Please, the country first, not the pained citizenry..."

'Tapika Lite & Live'

WE'VE spent a number of enjoyable acoustic nights at Tapika in Libis, QC. Thus, we're glad to learn Viva Records has produced a new "Tapika Lite & Live" album with three of the nightspot's crow-pleasers: Hourglass, Michaelangelo and Gian with Industria.

Hourglass consists of **Ria Villena-Osorio** on vocals, flute and keyboard; **Egay Caole** on vocals and percussion; and **Paolo Miguel Tiongson** on guitar and back-up vocals.

Michaelangelo is the sibling team of **Michael** and **Angelo Manahan**. Mike is on vocals and bongos/*kajon*. Angelo plays guitar.

Gian with Industria is composed of **Gian Magdangal** and the party band Industria—**Telay Robles** on vocals, **RJ Manese** on bass, **IJ Garcia** on keyboard and **Benjo Robles** on drums and percussion.

Forget Ho Chi Minh City

A TEAM of 35 ABS-CBN stars, production staff and crew flew to Ho Chi Minh City recently to shoot relevant sequences for the upcoming drama series, "Vietnam Rose," which stars Maricel Soriano.

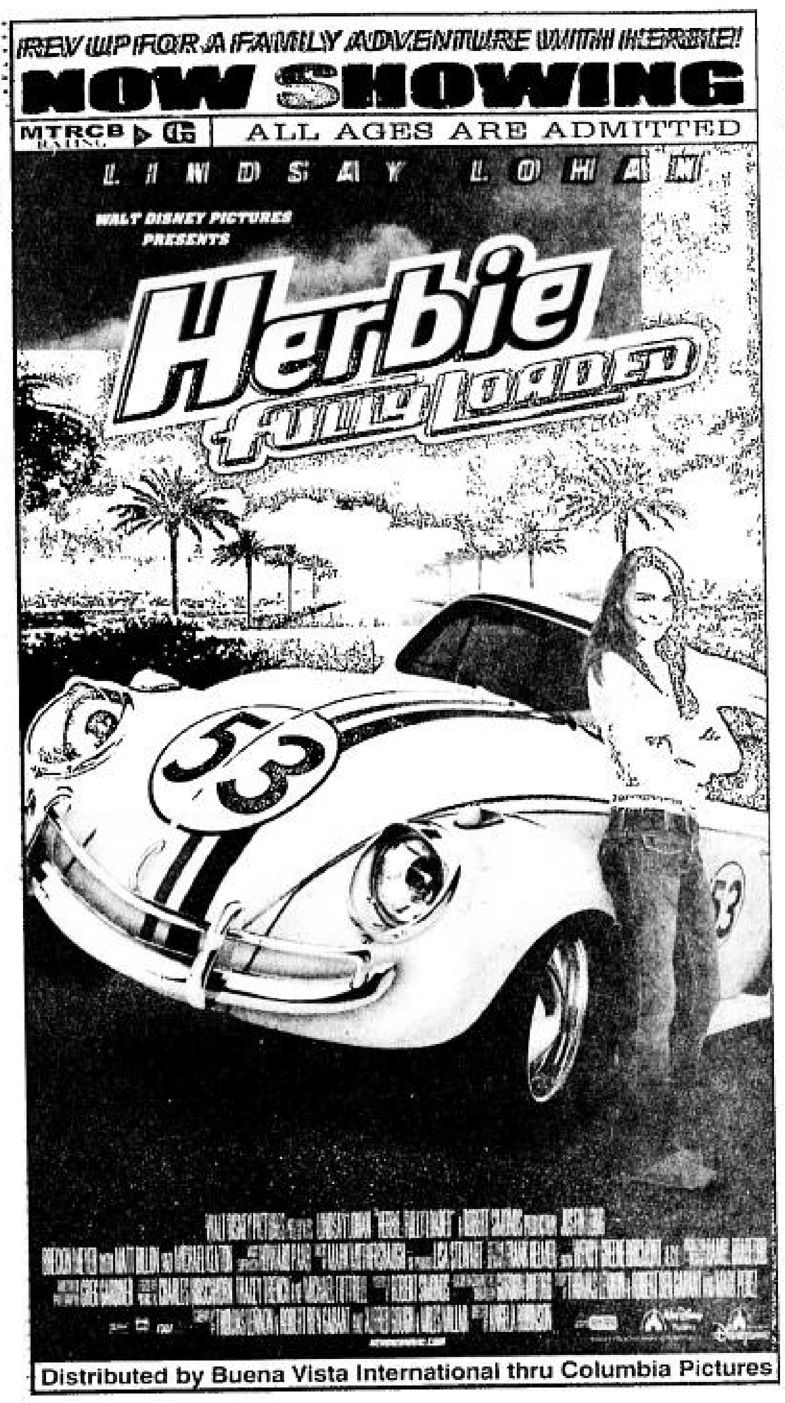
The series, written by Ricky Lee and directed by Joel Lamangan, is about a Vietnamese woman traumatized by war who leaves her country to start life anew in the Philippines.

The group—also including Don Cuaresma, second unit director; Monino Duque, lighting director; Cathy Perez, production manager; Desirey Fernandez-Juan, executive producer; and Joey Luna, wardrobe consultant—scoured Ho Chi Minh (formerly Saigon) and outlying areas for the perfect locations.

Initial filming took place mostly at Lam Son Square, Notre Dame Cathedral (a replica of Paris' own), Ben Thanh market and the historic Chua Vinh Nghiem Buddhist pagoda.

Other stars who joined the overseas shoot were Jay Manalo, Ricky Davao, Angelica Panganiban, AJ Dee and Jason Abalos. The rest of the cast consists of John Estrada, Michelle Madrigal, Luis Alandy, Chanda Romero, Gina Alajar, Joseph Bitangcol and Christopher Peralta.

"Vietnam Rose" marks Maricel's return to drama following her critically-acclaimed anthology, "Maricel Drama Special," more than a decade ago."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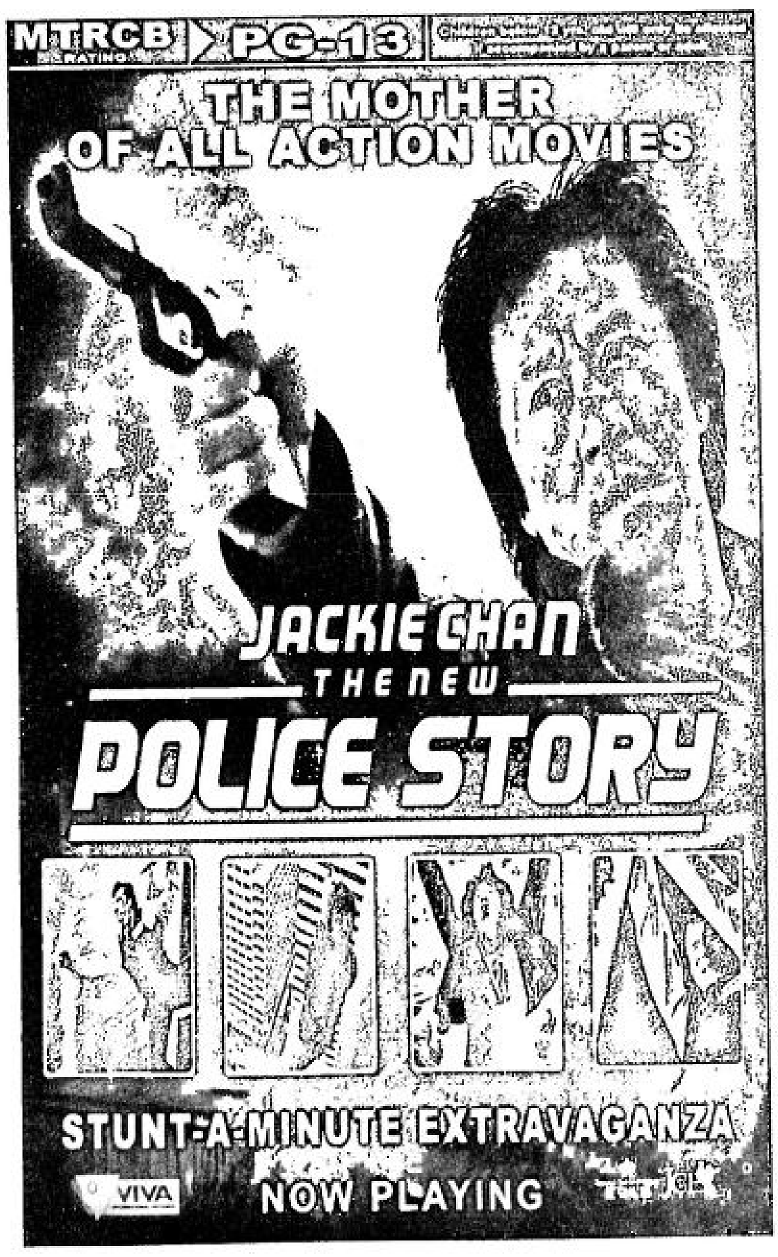
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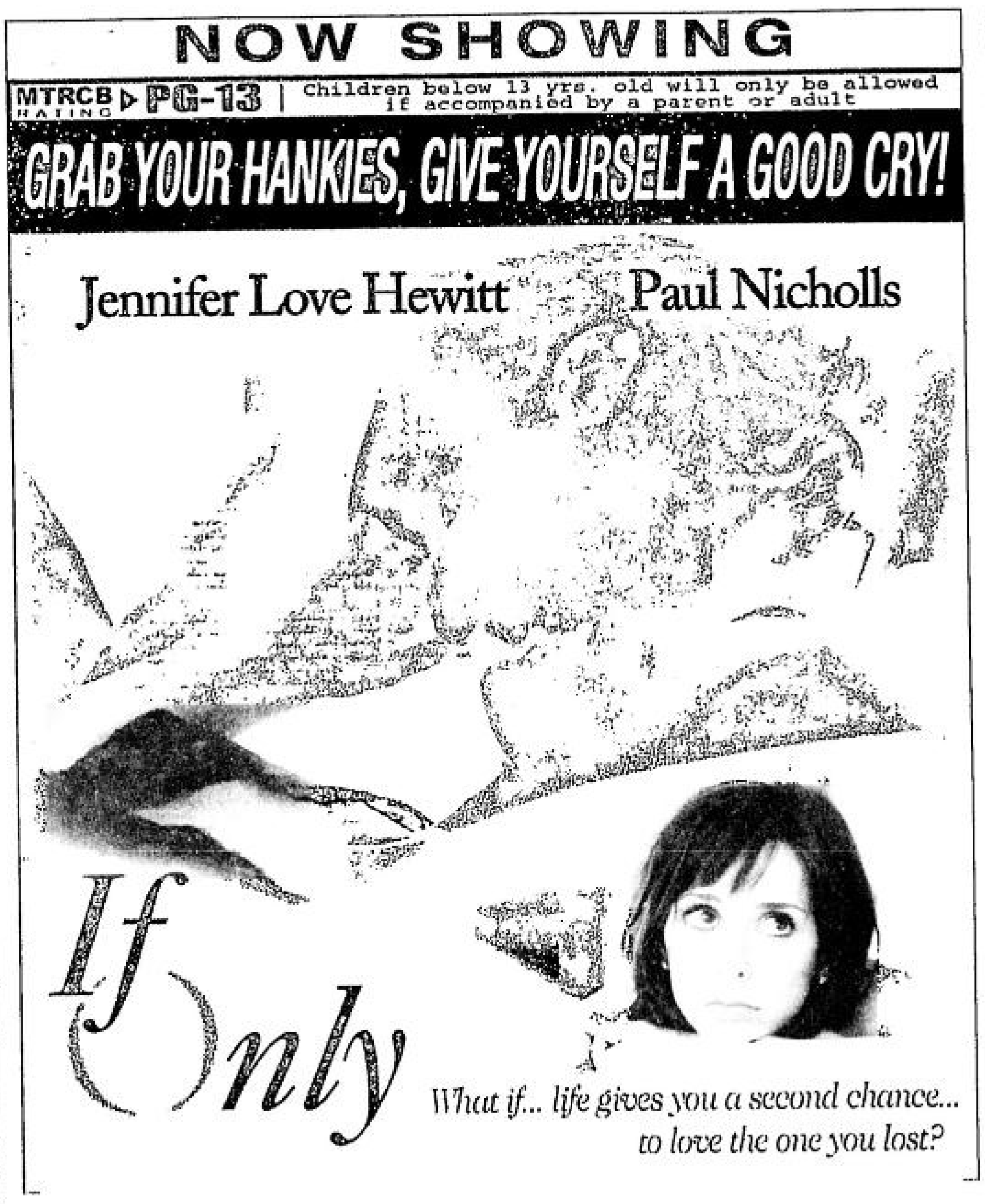
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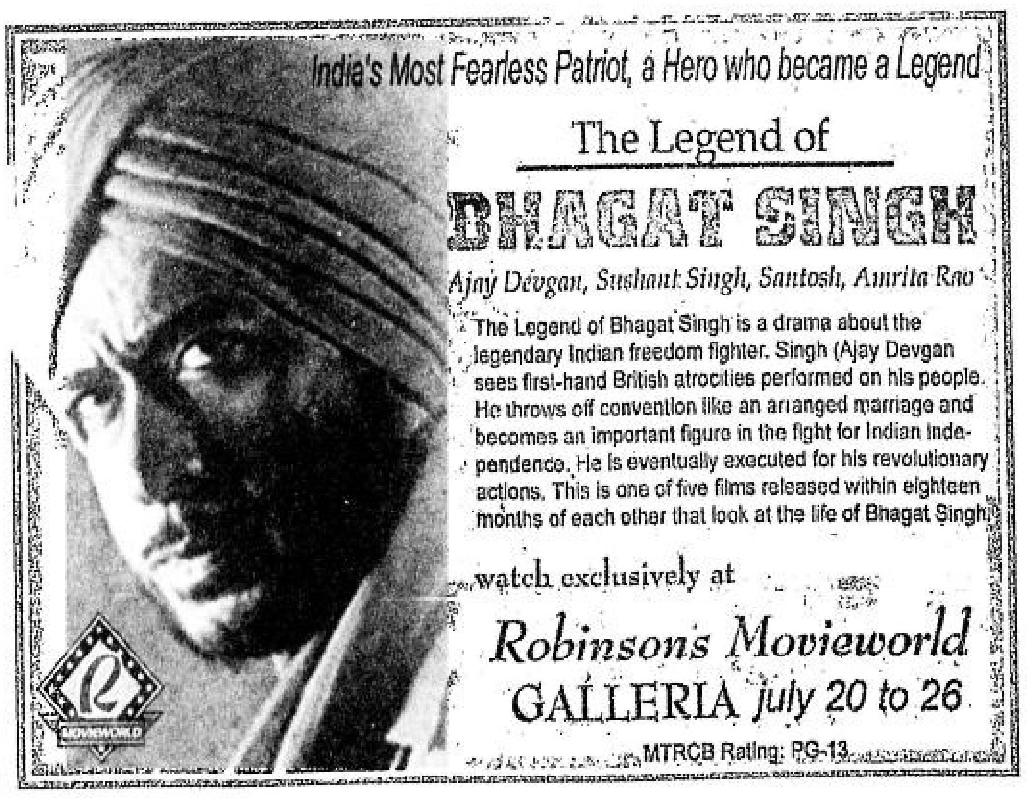
Jennifer Love Hewitt
Paul Nicholls
If Only
What if... life gives you a second chance... to love the one you lost?


India's Most Fearless Patriot, a Hero who became a Legend
The Legend of
BHAGAT SINGH
Ajay Devgan, Sushant Singh, Santosh, Amrita Rao
The Legend of Bhagat Singh is a drama about the legendary Indian freedom fighter. Singh (Ajay Devgan sees first-hand British atrocities performed on his people. He throws off convention like an arranged marriage and becomes an important figure in the fight for Indian independence. He is eventually executed for his revolutionary actions. This is one of five films released within eighteen months of each other that look at the life of Bhagat Singh.
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Directed by TOSHIHARU IKEDA
THIS SEMESTER, SOME ANGRY SOULS ARE ALSO ENROLLED...PAPASOK KA BA SA HAUNTED SCHOOL?

OPENING TODAY

The Assassination of Richard Nixon

Directed by Niels Mueller
Stars Sean Penn, Naomi Watts, Don Cheadle
Exclusively at Ayala cinemas

IN HIS Dec. 29, 2004 review for the New York Post, V.A. Musetto wrote: "Decades before 9/11—during the final days of the Nixon administration, to be exact—a distraught American man tried to hijack a jetliner and crash it into the White House. He never got anywhere near the President. But his story serves loosely—very loosely—as the basis for 'The Assassination of Richard Nixon.' It features Sean Penn in a mesmerizing portrayal of the would-be hijacker, Samuel Bicke [a salesman]... It's another right-on performance by the outspoken actor, going all the way back to stoner Jeff Spicoli in 'Fast Times at Ridgemont High' (1982)... He allows us to understand his character's pain without approving of his actions. Some may even see a bit of themselves in this tragic mix of Travis Bickle and Willy Loman."

The Evil Dead (Chow Lok Yuen)

Directed by Wai Keung Lau
Stars Derek Tsang, Bobo Chan, Laila Boonyasak

SCOTT Weinberg of efilmcritic.com wrote this review on the Net: "[The movie] is about a young woman who, along with four idiot friends, searches through a dank and deserted old amusement park for her missing brother. Nothing at all unexpected happens. There's a whole lotta boring chit-chat, a grim-looking amusement park to act as haunted setting, a few (barely) thrilling kill scenes, and a back story schpiel you've heard a hundred times before. An arid, derivative and frankly boring tale from Hong Kong, [the movie] is proof positive that not every Asian horror import is up to the standards of stuff like 'Ring,' 'The Eye' or even the so-so experience of 'Ju-On: The Grudge.'"

The Legend of Bhagat Singh

Directed by Rajkumar Santoshi
Stars Ajay Devgan, Sushant Singh, Amrita Rao
Exclusively at Robinsons Galleria

KAVITA Awasthi wrote this Bollywood film review on the Net: "Perhaps the best film made on Bhagat Singh... [It] describes each event chronologically and in depth. The film begins with the bodies of Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru being sneaked out of jail and burned. The reprehensible act creates public outrage. Flashback to the younger Singh, who watches incidents like the Jalianwala Bagh massacre and other acts of violence by the British. He grows up, joins the revolutionaries and Chandra Shekhar Azad. Soon he becomes leader of the pack. Later, Singh is put off by the nonviolence philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. He is condemned a terrorist and extremist. His beliefs and ideologies are published and they spread like wildfire among India's youth. His popularity matches that of Gandhi... A must-see film for history, for Singh and for actor Ajay Devgan."

Barbie leaves . . .

From page A26

You're a renewed Christian. Has spirituality changed your personal life?

It's a major factor in everything that's happening to me. I share the same vision and passion as my church—to serve God in any way possible. Spirituality has brought back for me a desire to learn; that's why I went back to La Salle, to finish my studies.

Name your influences.

As far as writing songs is concerned, Alanis Morissette, Shawn Colvin, Smashing Pumpkins. Further back, I remember listening a lot to Guns N' Roses, Aerosmith and Nirvana.

Who would you like to work with in future projects?

Rico Blanco.

Did you have formal music lessons?

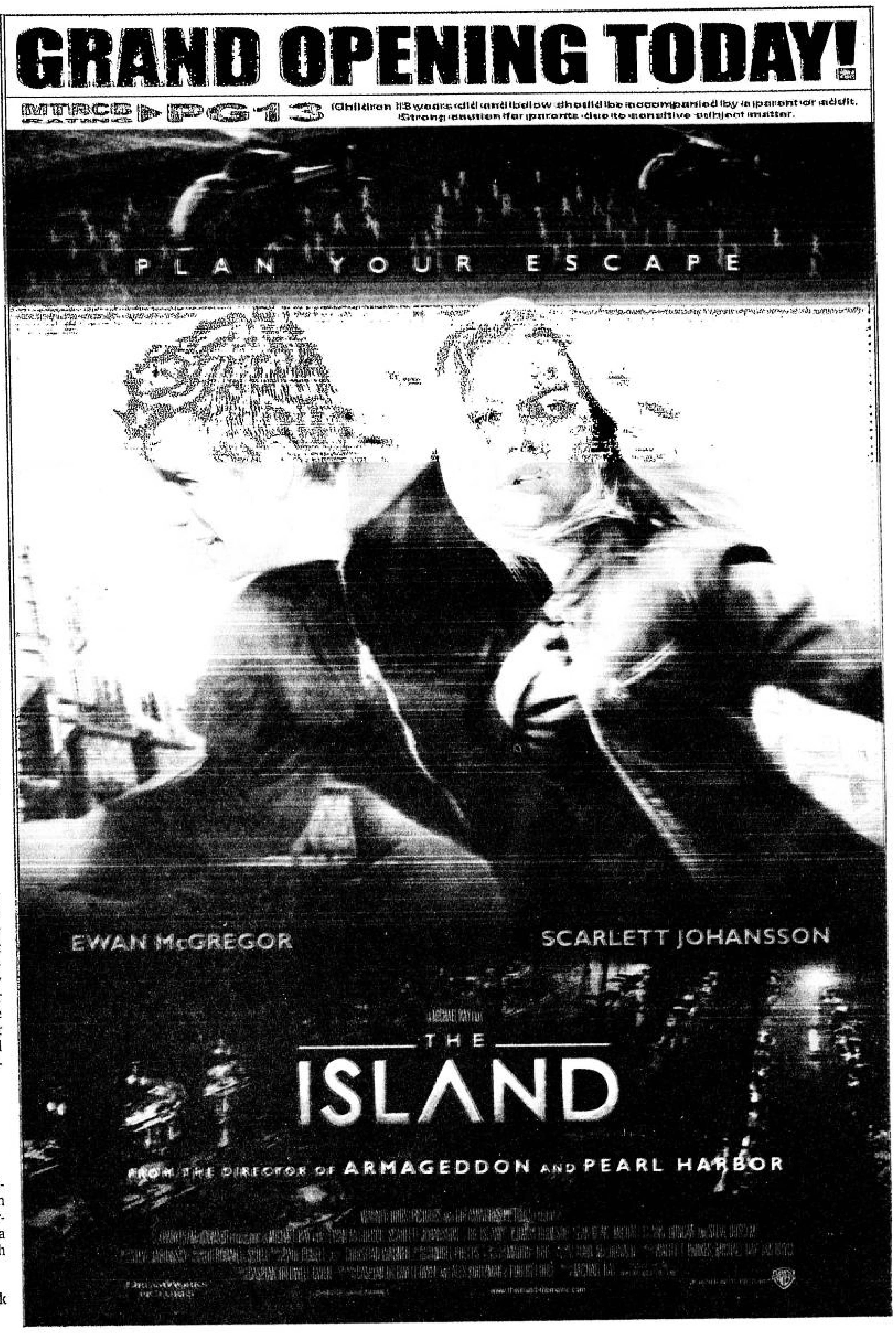
Music runs in the blood, on my mother's side. Both my mom and my grandmother played instruments, though not professionally. I remember tinkering with the piano at home when I was 7 years old. I was 11 when I took summer guitar lessons. At 14, I started writing songs. Although my interest in music waned because I got active in sports during high school in Assumption Iloilo, I remember co-writing the class graduation song.

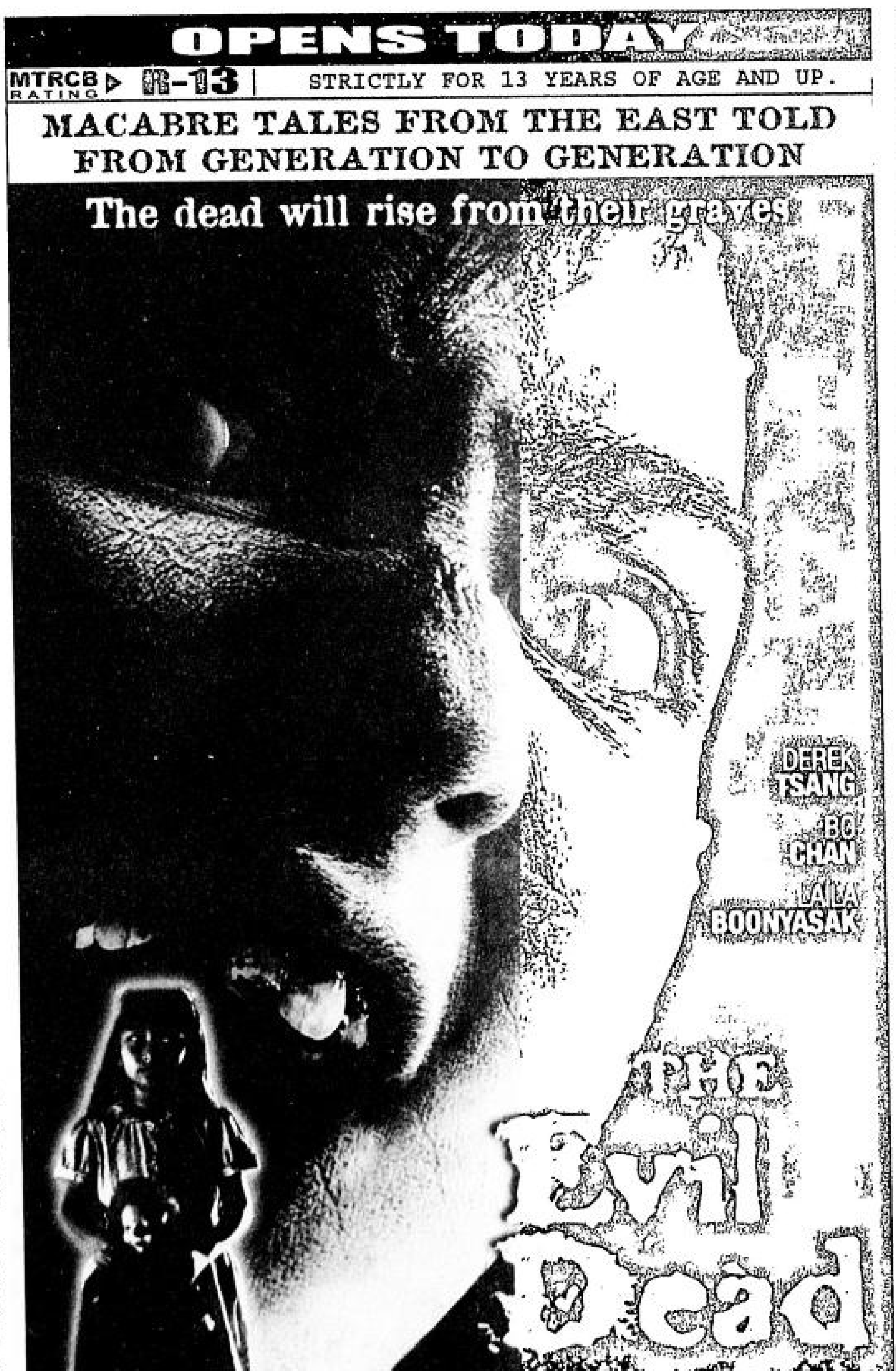
How did you end up in a rock band?

I had a seat mate in Accounting class in college. One day, he asked what I was scribbling in my notebook. I said I was writing lyrics. He told me he had a friend in the US who was also into music and coming home soon. The seat mate was Raymond Golamco, his friend was Ricci Gurango. We formed Hungry Young Poets.

Hungry Young Poets was part of the second wave of the local alternative rock scene. What was it like then?

It was great. *Kasabay namin sina* Cynthia Alexander and Rivermaya. Our first gig was at Freedom Bar in Quezon City. It was such a thrill playing alongside the Eraserheads.


GRAND OPENING TODAY!
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG13 (Children 13 years old and below should be accompanied by a parent or adult. Strong caution for parents due to sensitive subject matter.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Editor Emmie G. Velarde

Text us your feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

OPENING TODAY

The Island

Directed by Michael Bay
Stars Ewan McGregor, Scarlett Johansson

SCOTT of threemoviebuffs.com wrote this July 10 review on the Net: "'The Island' is an action-packed sci-fi adventure that carries all the hallmarks, both good and bad, of a typical Michael Bay film. It contains huge action sequences that rarely let up, sacrificing thoughtful commentary for the sake of explosions, and [giving up] character development for car chases. Big and bloated, it still manages to entertain, thanks in large part to its two talented leads, Ewan McGregor and Scarlett Johansson... Lincoln Six Echo [and Jordan Two-Delta are] living in a futuristic complex with hundreds of other survivors at the end of world. Every day, they are told that there is only one place left in the outside world that remains livable—the Island... With the technology for cloning quickly becoming a reality and the controversy over stem cell research a current topic, there is plenty of room for this movie to make a statement, but it never does."

OPENING/ A29

Injustice apparent in dismissal of Revillame case—Alentajan

By Marinel R. Cruz

THE PROSECUTOR overstepped her boundaries. Her job was merely to determine the existence of probable cause."

This was the indignant reaction of Bonifacio Alentajan, lawyer of tabloid editor Ma. Salvacion Asis, upon learning that Quezon City prosecutor Corazon Romano dismissed the charge of lasciviousness Asis had filed against TV host Willie Revillame in April.

Interpreting evidence

"[Romano] interpreted the evidence as if she were the judge. What kind of prosecutor is she? Her work was just to ascertain whether or not the suspect, Willie, is liable to stand for trial," Alentajan said.

In a five-page resolution, Romano dismissed the complaint for "lack of probable cause." She said she found no convincing evidence to sustain Asis' charges.

Asis had accused Revillame of making inappropriate sexual advances on her in March 2002.

Romano said the evidence failed to establish that an act of lewdness "using force or intimidation" had been committed. She added that the apology card Revillame reportedly gave Asis in contrition for the incident was only "proof of good faith and sans malice."

"She shouldn't be interpreting whether or not pieces of evidence are true. That's not her job. She said the card was simply a sign of good will. *Ano siya*, judge? Generally, if positive and negative pieces of evidence are presented, the positive evidence prevails," Alentajan explained.

The lawyer added: "She's guilty of gross ignorance of the law. She doesn't deserve to be a fiscal. If a fiscal renders an unjust decision, he or she could be administratively and criminally liable. She could be disbarred."

Alentajan also noted that copies of the resolution had been distributed to the media as early as July 1, yet they still have not received an official copy.

Deliberate intent?

"What I have with me right now is just a faxed copy," Alentajan told INQUIRER Entertainment last week. "The story came out on 'TV Patrol' the same day the resolution was released. Injustice is very apparent here. There is deliberate intent to deprive us of a copy," he said.

Alentajan added that Asis was now considering filing a motion for reconsideration or lodging a complaint against Romano before the Ombudsman or the Department of Justice.

In her complaint, Asis said Revillame touched her breasts and forced her to hold his private parts. Asis said Revillame kissed her forcibly on the lips, ears and cheeks.

According to Asis' affidavit, the TV host invited her and People's Journal Tonight columnist Ma. Lillian Fariñas to his home in Capitol Hills, Quezon City, late one night. On their way back to Padi's Point on Mindanao Avenue, where Fariñas' van was parked, Revillame reportedly assaulted Asis. When she tried to protest, Asis said, Revillame covered her mouth with his hand.

When the two women transferred to Fariñas' van, Revillame "forced himself into the van," and assaulted Asis again, she said in her complaint.

In his counter-affidavit, Revillame denied committing any of the acts Asis had accused him of, "much less with force and violence."

Revillame's lawyer Dexter Lacuanan said his client was very pleased with the dismissal.

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See poster mechanics for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4033 Series of 2005

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3755 Series of 2005

Barbie leaves Cradle to go solo

By Pocholo Concepcion
Contributor

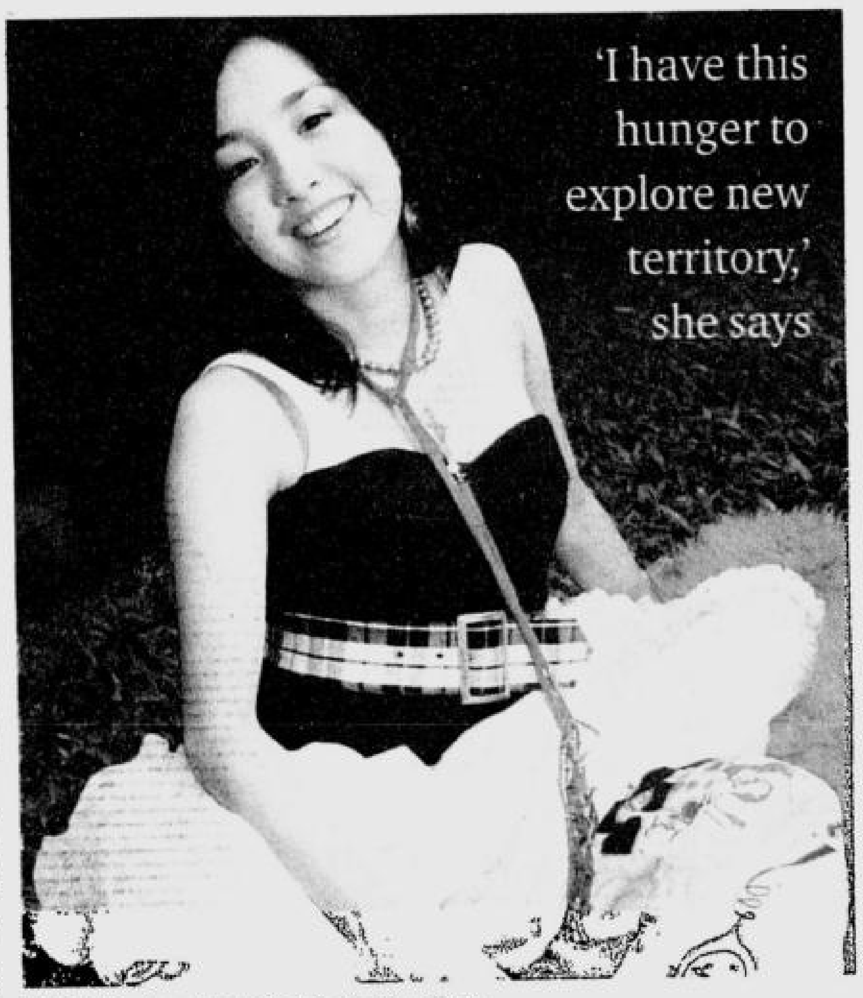
AFTER fronting two popular bands in a span of nine years, Barbie Almalbis feels it's time to pursue new directions as a singer-songwriter.

A few weeks ago, Almalbis played her last few gigs as a member of Barbie's Cradle, which she formed after the breakup of Hungry Young Poets—one of the most promising young bands to emerge from the local alternative rock scene in the mid-'90s.

The decision to leave Barbie's Cradle, Almalbis said, was not a painful one, as opposed to the rather acrimonious parting of ways she had with Hungry Young Poets. After talking to her band mates to express her desires and new priorities, Almalbis proceeded to inform Wyngard Tracy, who had been managing Barbie's Cradle for the past two years. Both the band and manager understood her position.

Almalbis recently bagged a lucrative deal writing and singing the latest Close Up toothpaste commercial jingle. She sat down with INQUIRER Entertainment and manager Tommy Tanchangco for this interview.

Tanchangco's management outfit and independent record label, 12 Stone Records, is handling Kitchie Nadal and a new band, RocksTeddy. It's a reunion of sorts for them, since he was the first manager of Hungry Young Poets and Barbie's Cradle.



'I have this hunger to explore new territory,' she says

BARBIE is also determined to finish college.

Why go solo at this point?

It came naturally. I've always had a desire to go solo, although it should not be misinterpreted that I was not happy with Barbie's Cradle. I had a wonderful working relationship with my band mates. But I also have this hunger to explore new territory. Commercially, Barbie's Cradle was inactive. We recorded our last album two years ago. Now I'm writing new songs, preparing for a solo album within the year.

Were you unhappy with Wyngard Tracy as manager?

On the contrary, he was doing his job really well. We were okay—we had regular gigs. He did say he wasn't closing the door.

What brought you and Tommy Tanchangco together again?

We belong to the same Christian church. At the time I was contemplating on leaving Barbie's Cradle, I remember seeing him. But it took some time before I talked to him about my plans. Things fell into place. He said he was interested in handling my career again.

BARBIE/ A29

HERO ANGELES
JOROSS GAMBOA

SANDARA PARK
ROXANNE GUINOO

MAKI KRUNG KRUNG NA...

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Gov't plans 1% hike in duties/B4

COCKTALES/B3

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2 boards of directors elected at EPCIB

By Doris C. Dumlao and Daxim L. Lucas

OPPOSING shareholders of Equitable PCI Bank yesterday elected two boards of directors, setting off what could be the biggest crisis in the bank's troubled history.

Shareholders led by state-owned pension funds and the Romualdez family yesterday walked out of a heated EPCIB stockholders' meeting after their attempt to oust incumbent chair Antonio Go was foiled.

The group consisting of the Government Service Insurance System, the Social Security System and the Romualdez family's Trans Middle-East Philippine Equities Inc. (TMEQ) then proceeded to Mandarin Hotel to hold its own stockholders' meeting.

There they elected a new set of directors—SSS president Corazon dela Paz, Ramon Jabar, Fulgencio Factoran, Luz Generoso, Nazario Cabuquit Jr., GSIS president Winston Garcia, Reynaldo Palmiery, Martin Romualdez, Anthony Te, Jesus Tirona, John Go, Genevieve Go, Peter Go Pailan, Anthony Go and Rene Buenaventura. Romualdez, the bank's incumbent co-vice chair, was named the new chair.

The group also named Pelagio Ricalde as the bank's new corporate secretary, ostensibly to replace Nilo Divina, who is allied with the Go camp.

The Go group and sympathetic stockholders continued with their own meeting at the Equitable PCIBank auditorium and also elected their own board made up of Peter Go Pailian, John Go, Genevieve Go, Anthony Conway, Rene Buenaventura, Antonio Basilio, Cesar Bautista, Anthony Go, Jonathan Go and Ricardo Morillo. It also named Miguel Roca, Dela Paz, Palmiery and Generoso (representing the pension funds) and Martin Romualdez. It retained Antonio Go as chair.

With the squabble, SSS president Corazon dela Paz said it was now up to the courts to decide which stockholders' meeting was valid.

She said their lawyers believed that the pension fund-led group's meeting was valid since it constituted a quorum.

"Since we have the majority, we believe we can proceed with our meeting because the meeting over there (of the Go group) was adjourned by the majority," Dela Paz said.

Asked which board the bank's management would recognize, she said their alliance hoped to get a favorable ruling from the courts.

The group said it had bank shares and proxies equivalent to 54.6 percent of the bank's outstanding capital stock as against the 35 percent held by the Gos.

Fireworks started after GSIS' Garcia presented a motion to declare the chair's seat vacant and nominated Romualdez as the new chair.

However, his motion was foiled by Divina, who rejected Garcia's subsequent motion to vote on the matter, arguing that the meeting must be presided by the incumbent chair "in accordance with the laws" and that the meeting must stick to the agenda.

How to seize control of a bank without really buying

By Daxim L. Lucas

(Last of a series)

SPECIAL REPORT

ALLOWING retail magnate Henry Sy Sr. to take over Equitable PCI Bank with the help of state pension funds may set a dangerous precedent where private entities may leverage public assets for personal gain.

Thus warned outgoing Equitable PCI independent director Roberto Romulo, as he assailed the "questionable" efforts of the Social Security System and the Government Service Insurance System to wrest control of the controversial bank from the equally controversial Go family.

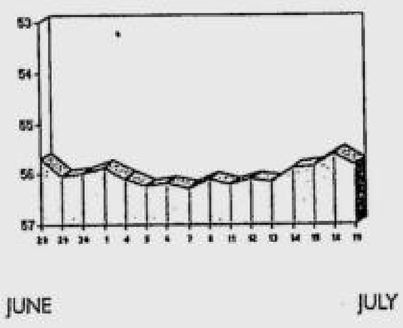
"I find this [takeover attempt] to be a worrisome precedent," he said. "Other unscrupulous people in the future may use this as a basis to corrupt GFIs (government financial institutions) which, in turn, will use public assets for the wrong reasons."

Romulo doesn't have to look too distant in-

HOW TO/ B4

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱55.83 = $1

As of 5 p.m., July 19, 2005

¥112.29 = $1

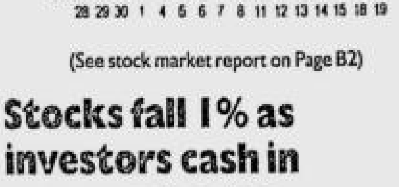
As of 3 p.m., July 19, 2005

GOLD:419.10-419.60

per ounce Hong Kong, July 19, 2005

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks fall 1% as investors cash in on recent gains

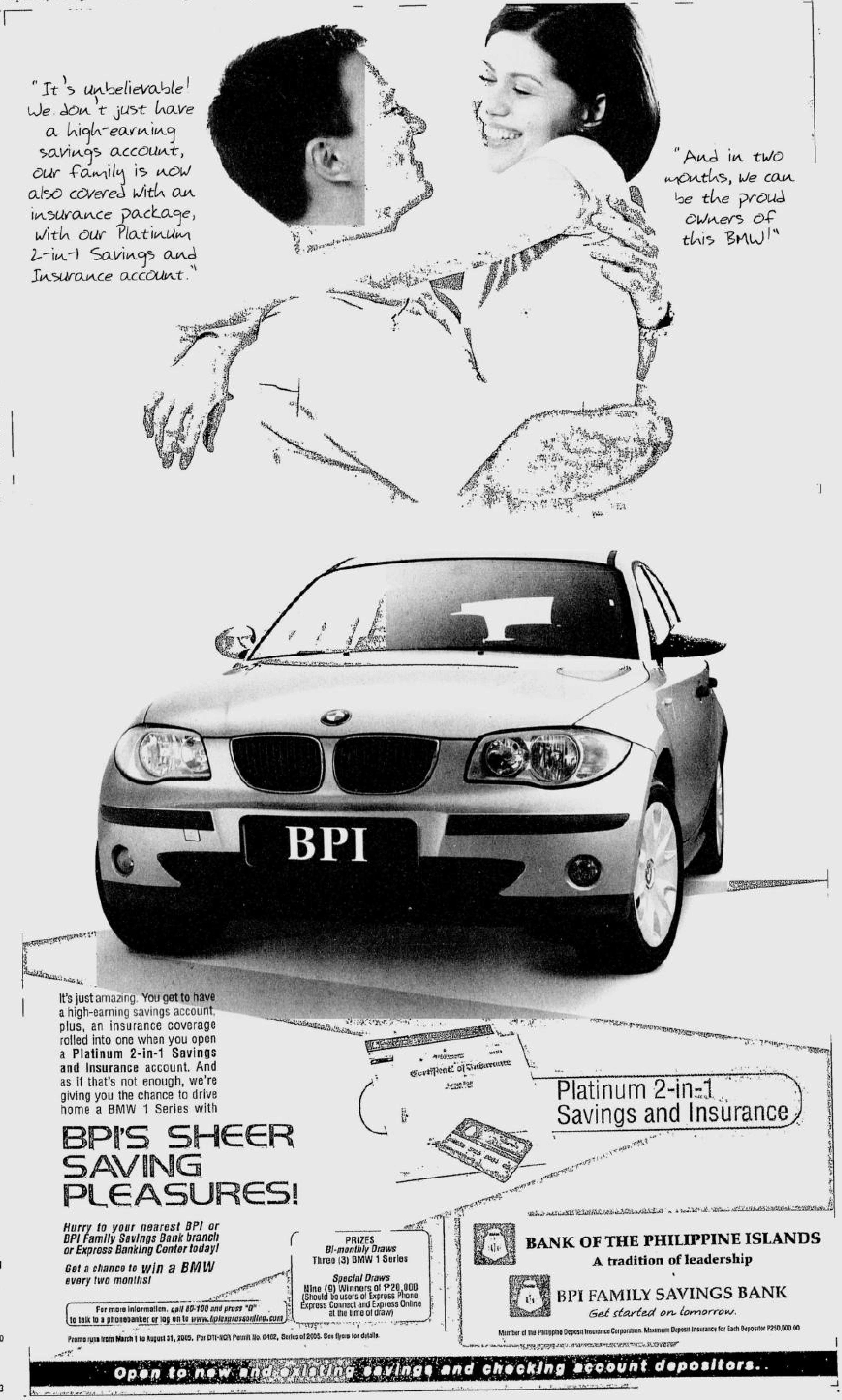
STOCKS fell yesterday as investors cashed in on gains from the past three sessions, traders said.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index closed down 19.7 points, or 1 percent, at 1,889.55, after rising 3 percent over the previous three sessions.

Blue-chip Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. was the most actively traded stock, falling 0.7 percent to P1,530.

Bank of the Philippine Islands slipped 1 percent to P49, SM Prime lost 1.4 percent to P7, First Holdings was down 1.2 percent at P42, and SM Investments gave up 1.7 percent to end at P226.

STOCKS/ B3



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Uytengsus place Alaska shares in another firm

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SCM BOND Holdings, a majority shareholder of the Uytengsu-led Alaska Milk Corp., trimmed its stake in the leading milk brand by selling 34 percent of its shares in Alaska to US-based Jadestone Investments LLC.

SCM Bond and Jadestone are both owned and controlled by the Uytengsu family, Alaska's corporate secretary Santiago Polido told the Philippine Stock Exchange.

SCM Bond, an Uytengsu investment company, sold 303.4 million of its common shares in Alaska at P3.11 per share or for a total of P944 million.

Before the sale of shares to Jadestone, SCM held 473.4 million shares in Alaska, representing a 53-percent stake in the milk brand.

Jadestone, on the other hand, is a company organized in Delaware, USA.

Alaska yesterday closed at P3.25 apiece.

Polido did not say why the Uytengsu family transferred the bulk of its holdings in Alaska.

Alaska earlier reported that its net income shrank 40 percent in the first quarter to P93 million from the P154 million posted in the same period last year.

The milk brand said it was hit by low consumption spending and surging milk prices.

Revenues in the first quarter also slipped 12 percent to P1.17 billion from P1.32 billion in the same period last year.

The company said weak sales resulting from sluggish consumer demand for milk products pared down its revenue.

On the other hand, cost of sales and operating costs fell 8 percent to P1.04 billion from P1.13 billion last year.

Grim prospects face the company this year, with the expected surge in skimmed milk powder prices, which rose to an all-time high of $2,400 per metric ton last year.

Alaska sources 100 percent of its milk requirements abroad.

Alaska president Wilfred Steven Uytengsu Jr. had said that, as much as possible, Alaska would not resort to another round of price increases because of weak consumer spending.

He also expects net earnings to drop this year by more than 15 percent from P497 million last year.

Despite the bleak picture, Uytengsu said Alaska continues to sit on a P1.85-billion pile of cash, a portion of which the firm will use to pay shareholders.

To date, its market share for condensed milk grew to 48 percent, evaporated milk to 41 percent, and powdered milk to 20.5 percent.

Alaska earlier inked an agreement with cereal producer Kellogg Group to distribute its products in the Philippines.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of July 19, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	30.5	30.5	30	30	480,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	49.5	49.5	48.5	49	860,500
China Banking Corp.	760	770	760	770	2,330
Citystate Savings Bank	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	300
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	280,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	51	51	49.5	49.5	49,200
International Exch. Bank	19	19	19	19	5,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	27.5	27.5	27	27.5	536,600
Philippine National Bank	45.5	46	45.5	46	19,400
Security Bank Corp.	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	300
Union Bank of the Phil.	29.5	29.5	29	29	33,300
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2740	2740	2740	2740	740
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.02	327,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1940	1960	1940	1960	3,240
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.25	12.25	12	12	52,200
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.02	1.02	1	1	257,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	840	840	830	830	7,730
Ipeople Inc.	3	3	2.95	2.95	133,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.046	100,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.18	2.18	2.18	2.18	10,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.65	2.65	2.6	2.65	295,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	15,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1550	1550	1530	1530	292,280
Philweb Corp.	0.017	0.017	0.016	0.017	9,300,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	14.5	14.5	14.25	14.5	151,600
Manila Electric Co. B	24.25	24.25	23.75	24	499,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	1,847,000
Petron Corp.	3	3	2.9	3	1,071,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.08	1.1	1.08	1.1	75,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	33,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	9,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7.8	8	7.8	7.8	1,488,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Holcim Philippines Inc.	2.95	2.95	2.85	2.85	225,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	5,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	3.75	3.8	3.7	3.8	4,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30	30	30	30	2,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	31	31.5	30	30.5	152,500
Pancake House Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	9,000
San Miguel Corp. A	61	61.5	61	61	57,200
San Miguel Corp. B	94	94	94	94	75,600
Universal Robina Corp.	16	16	16	16	30,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	200,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	12,000,000
Ayala Corp.	307.5	307.5	295	295	31,840
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.4	0.45	0.4	0.45	910,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.9	4.9	4.85	4.9	2,082,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.025	0.025	0.023	0.023	11,200,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.84	1.88	1.84	1.84	771,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	63,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.76	0.8	0.73	0.8	7,260,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	20,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.12	0.12	110,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.04	1.04	1	1.02	2,502,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	13,040,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	1,320,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	450,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	810,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	2.3	2.3	2.24	2.26	131,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.031	500,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	60,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	6.8	6.9	6.6	6.9	1,854,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	42	42.5	41	42	622,100
Global Equities Inc.	0.0775	0.08	0.075	0.075	1,400,000
House Of Investments Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	100,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	50,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.22	1.24	1,094,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.32	3,470,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	40,000
SM Investments Corp.	230	230	225	226	67,960
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	10,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	700,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.155	0.16	0.14	0.15	500,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Chemical Ind. Of The Phil	82	82	82	82	2,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	50,000
Macondray Plastics Inc.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	5,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	13,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.67	0.67	50,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.095	0.105	0.095	0.1	1,400,000
Pryce Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	60,000,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	10,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.96	0.96	0.93	0.93	4,610,000
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	5	7	4	4	7,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.22	1.3	1.22	1.3	3,427,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	70,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	12.5	12.5	12	12	261,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series K	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	11	11	11	11	6,300
PLDT 10% Pref Series AA	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	10,300
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	7.3	7.3	7.2	7.2	33,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.7	7.7	7.5	7.7	10,946,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.86	0.86	0.86	0.86	140,000
C & P Homes Inc	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	300,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.205	0.205	0.19	0.19	510,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	7,050,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.36	1.36	1.34	1.36	4,419,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.12	2.12	2.12	2.12	20,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.18	0.185	0.18	0.185	230,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	10,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.12	0.12	400,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	60,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.2	7.2	7	7	3,888,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	17,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	14,000
Benguet Corp. A	7	7	7	7	17,000
Benguet Corp. B	45	45	45	45	100
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	2,620,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.33	5,210,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.016	0.016	0.015	0.015	8,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.019	19,200,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	54,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	20,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	3,400,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	28.5	28.5	28	28	124,800
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	230,000
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	7,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0065	0.0065	0.006	0.0065	35,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	23,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	10,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	100,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.3	0.32	0.3	0.32	130,000

DISCLOSURES

F&J Prince Holdings Corp. elected as directors Amparo Barcelon, Emeterio Barcelon, Johnson Co, Homer Cokeng Jr., Francisco Cokeng Jr., Robert Cokeng, Manuel Dy, Francis Chua, Johnson Tan Gui Yee, Rufino Tiangco and Robert Ynson. It also reappointed as external auditor Sycip Gorres Velayo & Co.

* * *

THE **PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange** announced that Peter Favilia resigned as chair and independent director of the board of directors, as chair of the SSCP board of directors, as chair of the PSE listing committee, and as independent director of the Market Integrity Board. He was appointed secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry.

* * *

ALASKA Milk Corp.'s majority stockholder, SCM Bond Holdings Inc., sold 303,433,234 of its common shares to Jadestone Investments LLC.

* * *

ASIAN Terminals Inc. announced the resignation of Arturo Lopez as corporate treasurer and director. He will also retire on Aug. 6 as senior vice president of the corporate division.

Compiled by Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

July 19, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.829325	1.000000	55.6790
Japan	Yen	0.007412	0.008937	0.4976
United Kingdom	Pound	1.450075	1.748500	97.3547
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.106653	0.128602	7.1604
Switzerland	Franc	0.640950	0.772857	43.0319
Canada	Dollar	0.681506	0.821760	45.7548
Singapore	Dollar	0.492181	0.593472	33.0439
Australia	Dollar	0.625481	0.754205	41.9934
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.199918	2.652661	147.6975
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.221118	0.266624	14.8454
Brunei	Dollar	0.490725	0.591716	32.9462
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000102	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.019869	0.023958	1.3340
UAE	Dirham	0.225820	0.272294	15.1611
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.205800	67.1377
Argentina	Peso	0.289468	0.349040	19.4342
Brazil	Real	0.356622	0.430015	23.9428
Denmark	Kroner	0.134008	0.161587	8.9970
India	Rupee	0.019078	0.023004	1.2808
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.218255	0.263172	14.6532
Mexico	New Peso	0.078168	0.094255	5.2480
New Zealand	Dollar	0.562980	0.678841	37.7972
Norway	Kroner	0.124578	0.150216	8.3639
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013919	0.016784	0.9345
South Africa	Rand	0.124458	0.150071	8.3558
Korea	Won	0.000803	0.000968	0.0539
Sweden	Kroner	0.106073	0.127903	7.1215
Syria	Pound	0.015976	0.019264	1.0726
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025981	0.031328	1.7443
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BMW 120i Exec. 2005 Quartz Blue Was P2,195,000 Is P2,085,250
BMW Z4 2.5i Roadster 2005 Topaz Blue Was P3,700,000 Is P3,400,000
BMW Z4 2.5i Roadster 2005 Sterling Grey Was P3,700,000 Is P3,400,000
BMW 520i Limo 2005 Mystic Blue Was P3,990,000 Is P3,790,000
BMW X3 2.5i SAV 2005 Mystic Blue Was P3,550,000 Is P3,373,000
SOLD BMW X5 3.0i Exec. 2004 Black Sapphire Was P5,492,000 Is P5,218,000
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50% Down, 24 Months 0 Interest
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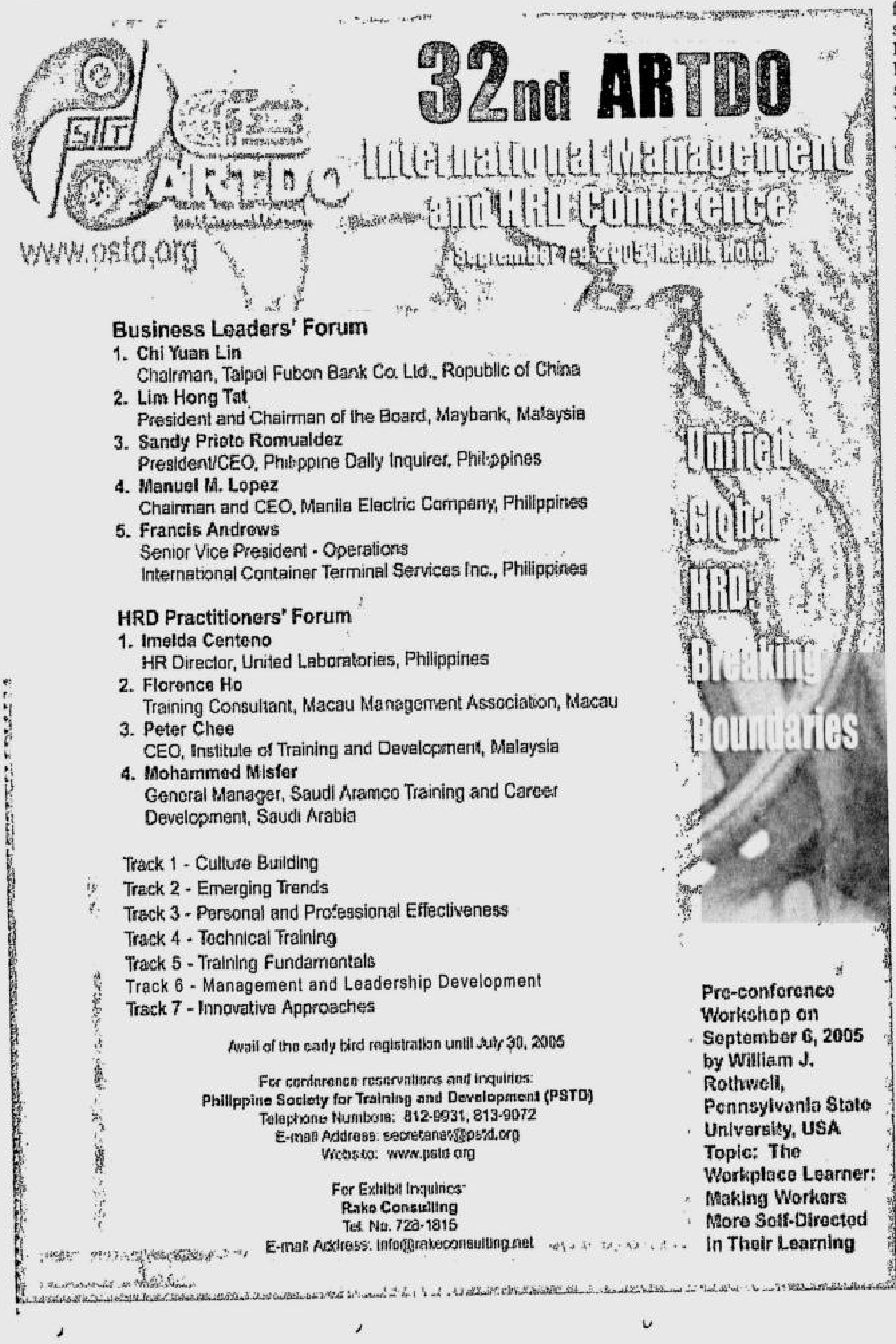
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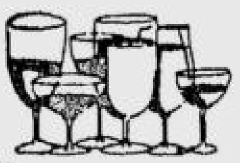

Victor C. Agustin

THE ABS-CBN and GMA ratings war have spilled overseas, with the two leading networks simultaneously staging their star-studded shows for the Fil-Am community in the Bay Area this Saturday.

GMA flew about 40 stars and executives to San Francisco last week, while ABS-CBN dispatched an apparently bigger delegation.

Because of the entertainment invasion, the business class section of Philippines Airlines has been fully booked these past few days; even frequent flier businessman Roberto Cuenca could not get a seat on the San Francisco flight.

If you believe the pro-ABS-CBN grapevine, the Lopez network has already stolen the thunder from the competition with its salvo last Sunday at the humongous Rose Bowl Stadium in Pasadena, with no less than Nora Aunor among the main guests.

But more than the ratings battle, the ABS-CBN and GMA roadshows are providing entertainment relief for Fil-Americans, who have grown sick of the daily barrage of toxic politics from their land of birth.

Even ABS-CBN honcho Eugenio Lopez III apparently welcomed the overseas break, so he would not get besieged daily from all quarters about the content and direction of his network's political coverage.

According to the grapevine, Lopez plans to fly back to Manila next week, after the President shall have already delivered her State-of the Nation (or whatever is left of the nation) address.

Jesus is in Europe

AFTER shouting himself hoarse these past few weeks, Bro. Eddie Villanueva is leaving this weekend on a European tour, apparently to attend to the expansion plans of his Jesus is Lord congregation.

According to one of his advisers, Bro. Eddie will not be in town for President Arroyo's Sona, and his flock is seeking guidance from the preacher now that his and the underground Left's "Resign All" strategy are going nowhere.

Money-go-round

- AUTO Prominence, the disenfranchised Audi distributor/dealer, has hired as counsel a classmate of Chief Justice Hilario Davide, Purita Honanosas Cortes, to prevent her cash-strapped client from posting P16 million in filing fees in the P2.1-billion damage suit,that Auto Prominence filed against the German automotive company.
- THE ARCHITECTURAL firm of Leandro V. Locsin Partners said the national artist did not design the aesthetically challenged head office building of Bank of the Philippine Islands, contrary to what was reported here on July 15.
- HIS newspaper may have collapsed from debt and he may have availed himself of a "consumption" loan from a thrift bank in the recent past, but Today ex-president Enrique "Henry" Locsin swears by the Masonic code that the P2.525-million Jaguar X saloon he acquired after being named a Malacañang nominee in the sequestered Philcomsat, along with a Mike Arroyo cousin, had been "paid for with (my) own money."
- AND speaking of luxury cars, Forbes magazine's current feature on "Unreliable Luxury Cars" makes very interesting reading.

Heard through the grapevine

SULO Hotel has been quietly put on the block, with owner "Biboy" Enriquez planning to switch to farming and more relaxed pursuits.

(E-mail: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Stocks fall . . .

From page B1

Limiting the market's losses were Ayala Land, which rose 1.3 percent to P7.70, and International Container Terminal, up 1.3 percent at P7.80.

All sectoral indicators retreated, except the oil subindex, which advanced. Decliners led gainers 61 to 21, while 39 stocks were unchanged.

"The market was trying to go up early in the session due to the buying momentum in previous sessions. But somewhere along the way, it stalled and the market lost direction, prompting investors to take profit," said Westlink Global Equities chair Rommel Macapagal. *AP*

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Gov't planning to raise import duties by 1%

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT plans to implement a 1-percent across-the-board hike in import duties to compensate for the revenues lost due to the suspension of the expanded value-added tax law.

The move is seen to generate P14.6 billion in incremental revenue yearly which, the Department of Finance said, could help offset the losses arising from the suspension of the VAT law implementation.

The government has been losing P130 million a day due to the VAT suspension since July 1, the DOF said earlier.

Finance Assistant Secretary Gil Beltran said the DOF wanted the plan to push through even if the VAT law suspension would be lifted by the Supreme Court.

It is but proper for the government to implement a compensatory measure since it should have been collecting additional revenue from the VAT since July 1, the DOF said.

He said the planned one-percent increase in import duties would cover products that were not exempted from duties.

Finance officials discussed the plan yesterday during a meeting with newly appointed Finance Secretary Margarito Teves. In the next few days, the DOF is expected to ask Malacañang to issue an executive order directing the hike in import duties.

The increase in import duties will push revenue collection by the Bureau of Customs, the second biggest revenue contributor among government agencies. In the first half of the year, Customs collection stood at P68.434 billion.

The Supreme Court issued the TRO on the implementation of the VAT law on July 1.

The petitioners claimed that the VAT law, considered the cornerstone of the Arroyo administration's efforts to solve the country's fiscal problem, was unconstitutional.

The law basically expanded the coverage of the tax to include oil and electricity among others, and gave the President a standby authority to raise the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent.

Opposition lawmakers were questioning the constitutionality of Congress giving a standby authority to President Macapagal-Arroyo to raise the VAT rate. They said Congress should not delegate this power of the legislature to the President.

For their part, petroleum dealers said three provisions of the VAT law, which put limits on the input VAT credits, were deemed "oppressive" and could go against the principle of equity in taxation. The three provisions include the 70-percent VAT cap, the spreading over a five-year period of the input VAT claims earned from the purchase of capital equipment worth at least P1 million, and the final withholding VAT of 5 percent when selling to a government entity.

The Supreme Court heard the oral arguments both of the petitioners and government representatives last July 14. Both parties are given 10 days to submit their written memorandum.

RISING FUEL PRICES

PAL seeks another fare hike

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE CONTINUED rise in fuel prices prompted Philippine Airlines to ask the Civil Aeronautics Board for a $15 increase in fare for every one-way trip to the United States, Canada and Australia.

The increase, if approved, would bring the fuel surcharge on PAL's long-haul trips to $37 per passenger, from the current level of $22.

This will be PAL's fourth increase since world oil prices started going up a year ago.

Fuel accounts for 40 percent of the airlines' operating costs. A weaker peso is driving the cost of imported fuel even higher.

PAL, controlled by Lucio Tan, is maintaining its fuel surcharge of $16 on Middle East flights and $14 on all other foreign trips.

PAL president Jaime Bautista said the fuel surcharge served as a temporary relief for airlines that suffered rising costs due to increases in jet fuel prices.

The United States market represents 20 percent of PAL's overseas operations. Foreign flights account 60 percent of the airline firm's business.

Aviation turbo now costs $73 per barrel, up from $55 per barrel a month ago, according to Bautista. Existing PAL fares were based on a jet fuel price of $60 per barrel.

Bautista said the $15 in additional surcharge would bring the company's fuel factor to $65 per barrel, still short of the actual cost but would give the airline "some breathing space."

"We will see to it that we will maintain a stable financial condition," said Bautista.

In the previous fiscal year ending March 2005, PAL was expected to post P1 billion in net income.

The final data, according to Bautista, will be out in the next two weeks.

The PAL chief said new international accounting procedures that the country's largest airline company started implementing the previous fiscal year may have a material impact on earnings.

CAB's head of hearing division Fred Villarin said the depreciation of the peso had been further jacking up the prices of aviation fuels.

The peso dropped to 56 to $1 last week from 55.35 in the first quarter.

"The fuel surcharges being imposed by the carriers are significantly lower than the actual increases in the cost of fuel per passenger," said CAB executive director Tomas Mañalac.

How to seize control . . .

From page B1

to the future. In fact, he can look at the recent past to see that his fear has already been realized in the very same bank he now helps steer.

Government muscle

Six years ago, Equitable Banking Corp., a laggard in the banking industry, became the third-largest bank in the country by acquiring 72 percent of Philippine Commercial International Bank from the Gokongwei and Lopez families.

How the Go family of Equitable Bank edged out larger bidders, like the Bank of the Philippine Islands and the Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., is still the subject of much controversy.

At that time, bank chair George Go—brother of current chair Antonio Go—convinced the SSS and GSIS to sink in a combined P16 billion to help Equitable buy the much bigger PCI Bank.

George Go was then rumored to be a close associate of former President Estrada. It was Go's bank that held the controversial Jose Velarde account, which was allegedly used to launder proceeds from jueteng operations of the deposed president's cronies.

Analysts do not know for certain why the Estrada-appointed officials of the pension funds agreed to lend their financial muscle to the Go family. But on hindsight, one thing is clear: it was a bad investment.

From an adjusted acquisition price of P96.67 apiece, Equitable PCI Bank's share price now trades at a mere P50.50 per share, representing a 47-percent decline in the value of their initial investment. At the height of its financial woes in 2001, the bank's share price even dropped to as low as P16 per share—a whopping 83-percent decline in the pension funds' initial acquisition price.

Almost overnight, George Go went from being the toast of the banking community to an instant pariah. Even his relatives refer to him as "the one who almost brought the bank down," according to banking insiders.

To this day, there is a simmering conflict between George and the rest of the family, now led by his brother Antonio.

Meanwhile, what was the most promising stock in the SSS and GSIS portfolios became the most unattractive, although SSS managed to reduce its "paper losses" by throwing more good money after bad, buying fresh shares off the market to "average down" their acquisition price to P75 apiece.

Now, SSS president Corazon de la Paz wants to know how things went so bad so quickly for the state-administered pension fund which is now struggling with liquidity problems as a result of so many bad investments and dud loans.

Ghosts of the past

De la Paz said an audit committee is now taking a fresh look at the deal which allowed the Go family to take control of the bank without spending their own funds.

"We are concerned about issues we've heard about the affairs of the bank that we want further clarified," she said, cryptically at first. "We would like to make sure that these investigations continue to our satisfaction."

"There are questions about how the merger was effected," she explained later. "We believe a more thorough review is needed."

The SSS chief said that only with a more independent set of board directors—presumably, ones who are not controlled by the Go family—will these long-standing controversies finally come to light.

De la Paz is only partly correct in questioning the deal.

While the Gos did not spend cash to acquire PCI Bank, they did put in their shareholding in Equitable Bank as currency for the deal. The resulting merger diluted the Gos' stake from 55 percent to its current level of 25 percent.

The Go family is arguing that this decline in ownership can be translated directly into money spent for seizing control of the bank that they are now trying hard to retain.

Even De la Paz's allies in the GSIS grudgingly concede this point.

"Mergers can be effected either with cash or with shares," GSIS executive vice president Reynaldo Palmiery said, stressing that the real issue is the Gos' belligerent attitude toward the majority block, which he represents on the board.

Bank vice chair Ferdinand Martin Romualdez—an erstwhile ally of the GFIs and, presumably, the Henry Sy camp—believes that the Go family can only retain control of the bank by keeping majority shareholders out of the loop regarding board issues.

"The very essence of corporate governance is representation," he said. "Without that, issues cannot be ventilated and transparency then becomes questionable."

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Japan firm seen raising capacity of mining venture

By Ronnel W. Domingo

SUMITOMO Metal Mining Co. Ltd. of Japan plans to double the capacity of its nickel processing plant in Palawan but reports that the local government is setting limits on mining activities may dampen this, according to a trade and industry official.

Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez yesterday said SMM had planned for expansion due to the initial success of the Palawan venture that started full operation last April.

SMM is operating through Coral Bay Nickel Corp., a high pressure acid leach (HPAL) facility in Bataraza town. This forms part of a $180-million investment package at the Rio Tuba nickel mining area.

"Sumitomo wants to double its investments in the country, but the company is concerned whether it could secure stable supply of nickel ores," he said. "The present facility is good only for the existing ore reserve."

Coral Bay is processing nickel from a long-standing low-grade ore dump at the Rio Tuba site.

According to SMM, some 16 million tons of laterite—a kind of nickel oxide—is stockpiled next to the existing plant site with enough supply to provide raw material for its project in the next 20 years.

Hernandez said that he met last week with Sumitomo officials during a gathering of representatives of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development.

"They told me that Puerto Princesa was limiting the elevation for mineral extraction and that they are concerned this would compromise the sustainability of ore supply over the years," he said.

Napocor moves to prevent power shortfall in Cebu

NATIONAL Power Corp. has delivered 2 million liters of bunker oil to the Naga Plant Complex in Cebu to prevent a shortfall in power supply in the Cebu-Negros-Panay (CNP) grid.

The first 500,000 liters of fuel was delivered last Monday, enabling Naga facility operator Salcon Power Corp. to start up the 50-megawatt (MW) Cebu Thermal Power Plant-1 (CTPP-1) and the 55-MW CTPP-2.

Another 1.5 million liters was brought to the Naga facility yesterday, with a delivery of another three million liters scheduled for today.

In a statement, Napocor said the second bunker fuel shipment would allow Salcon to resume operating all thermal and diesel units in the power generation facility.

The third shipment would give the entire power plant complex enough fuel up to the end of the month.

A fourth shipment of 6 million liters of bunker oil, enough to run the thermal and diesel facilities in the Naga complex up to next month, will be delivered this weekend.

With these fuel shipments, Napocor said power supply in the CNP grid should go back to normal.

The CTPP-2 tripped last Saturday due to a slight delay in the arrival of its fuel supply. Two days after the CTPP-2 shutdown, the CTPP-1 also ceased operating.

The delay was caused by the lack of available barges to make the delivery last weekend.

Napocor had to use trucks to deliver the fuel to the Naga power complex, which took a bit longer than if barges were used for the deliveries.

Abigail L. Ho

Splash puts up health goods unit

PERSONAL care products manufacturer Splash Corp. has put up a subsidiary to tap into the growing market for "nutraceuticals."

Called Splash Pharmaceutical Corp., the subsidiary was seen providing Splash with a foothold in the North American and European markets for natural food products.

"Splash Pharmaceutical is also envisioned to lift the image of the natural food industry from its folkloric image to a modern, science-based business," said Rolando Hortaleza, chair and CEO of the Splash Group in a statement.

Nutraceuticals are defined as natural food components claiming to boost health and reduce the risk of chronic disease.

Hortaleza said establishing the pharmaceutical company was part of Splash's vision to become a total wellness company and to develop the local market for nutraceuticals.

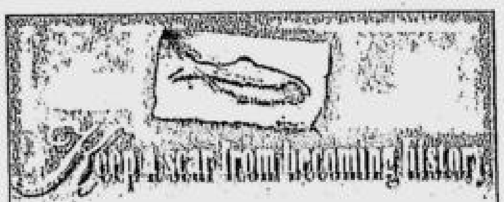
A recent survey conducted by Food and Nutrition Research Institute of the Department of Science and Technology (FNRI)-DOST, showed that among the Manila respondents, a considerable 62.5 percent were not aware of the benefits of nutraceutical products.

According to FNRI-DOST, the level of awareness and extent of usage of nutraceutical products was relatively low despite the availability of these products in many drug and health food stores in Metro Manila.

Splash said one reason was that the nutraceutical industry was still caught up in the traditional image of its predecessor—the traditional herbal medicine.

"By leveraging on the strength of the Splash Group and the Splash Research Institute, Splash Pharmaceutical is keen on proving that nutraceutical applications should be backed up by science and research to ensure efficacy and safety of the products," said Sinforoso Soriano, chief operating officer of Splash Pharmaceutical.

Nutraceuticals is an $80-billion global and growing industry and is widely popular in the US, Canada, Japan and Europe.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SEC Bldg., EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila

CORPORATION FINANCE DEPARTMENT

IN THE MATTER OF THE :

FIRST METRO SAVE AND LEARN : Registration of Securities
FIXED INCOME FUND, INC. :

Registrant

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that on June 22, 2005, a sworn registration statement was filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission for and on behalf of **FIRST METRO SAVE AND LEARN FIXED INCOME FUND, INC.** for the registration of its entire authorized capital stock of **Two Hundred Million (200,000,000)** common shares with the par value of P1.00 each, or an aggregate value of **Two Hundred Million Pesos (P200,000,000.00)**.

According to the papers/documents presented, the following persons are the officers/directors of the corporation.

NAME	POSITION
Victor C. Macalincag	Chairman
Atty. Antonio M. Bernardo	Director
Bro. Manuel V. de Leon, FMS	Director
Gloria C. Garrovillo	Director
Edwin B. Valeroso	Director
Danilo G. Olondriz	Chief Financial Officer
Atty. Nimfa B. Pastrana	Corporate Secretary

Said registration statement and other papers/documents attached thereto are open to inspection by interested parties during business hours and copies thereof, photostatic or otherwise, shall be furnished to every party at such reasonable fees as the Commission may prescribe.

JUSTINA F. CALLANGAN
Director

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Bldg., EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila

CORPORATION FINANCE DEPARTMENT

IN THE MATTER OF THE :

FIRST METRO SAVE AND LEARN : Registration of Securities
EQUITY FUND, INC. :

Registrant

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that on June 22, 2005, a sworn registration statement was filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission for and on behalf of **FIRST METRO SAVE AND LEARN EQUITY FUND, INC.** for the registration of its entire authorized capital stock of **One Hundred Million (100,000,000)** common shares with the par value of P1.00 each, or an aggregate value of **One Hundred Million Pesos (P100,000,000.00)**.

According to the papers/documents presented, the following persons are the officers/directors of the corporation.

NAME	POSITION
Victor C. Macalincag	Chairman
Atty. Antonio M. Bernardo	Director
Bro. Manuel V. de Leon, FMS	Director
Gloria C. Garrovillo	Director
Edwin B. Valeroso	Director
Danilo G. Olondriz	Chief Financial Officer
Atty. Nimfa B. Pastrana	Corporate Secretary

Said registration statement and other papers/documents attached thereto are open to inspection by interested parties during business hours and copies thereof, photostatic or otherwise, shall be furnished to every party at such reasonable fees as the Commission may prescribe.

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STATEMENT OF CONDITION

(Head Office and Branches)
As of June 27, 2005

ASSETS

Cash and Cash Items	P	719,176,533.55
Due from Bangko Sentral		1,597,222,211.90
Due from Other Banks		2,798,632,224.72
Trading Account Securities (Net)		612,234,117.74
Investments in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)		14,023,463,539.26
Loans, Discounts & Advances (Net)		27,886,926,933.77
Equity Investments (Net)		25,000,000.00
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (Net)		1,769,128,484.08
Other Assets (Net):		
Property Owned/Acquired		2,167,153,663.66
Others		1,018,151,143.71
TOTAL ASSETS	P	52,617,088,852.39

LIABILITIES

Demand Deposits	P	3,540,770,285.35
Savings Deposits		11,806,855,981.44
Time Deposits		31,222,845,666.57
Due to Bangko Sentral		7,533,888.38
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders		203,731,351.76
Unearned Income & Other Deferred Credits		36,084,780.04
Other Liabilities		1,016,751,992.56
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P	47,834,573,946.10

CAPITAL ACCOUNTS

Capital Stock	P	1,795,015,200.00
Surplus		2,599,392,570.87
Surplus Reserves		388,107,135.42
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	4,782,514,906.29
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	52,617,088,852.39

CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS

Bills for Collection	P	314,841.09
Assets Held Under Trust and Investment Management Agreements		586,079,705.83
Invested in:		
Government Securities		20,000,000.00
Other Securities, Debt Instruments and Shares of Stock		72,858,564.17
Other Assets		493,221,141.66
Accountabilities:		
Trust & Other Fiduciary		153,585,153.40
Investment/Fund Management		432,494,552.43
Other Contingent Accounts		93,873,715.50
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	P	680,268,262.42

Additional Information:

1 Deposits of		
a) Government	P	
b) Banks		4,055,730.65
c) Trust Department		493,173,172.94
2. a. Total Non-Performing Loans		1,724,303,836.92
b. Classified Loans & Other Risk Assets		2,460,050,955.21
c. General Loan Loss Reserve		245,681,269.63
d. Specific Loan Loss Reserve		690,457,419.37
e. Total DOSRI Loans/Advances		1,674,218,702.07
f. Past Due DOSRI Loans Advances		
g. Ratio of Non-Performing Loans to Total Loan Portfolio		5.58%
h. Ratio of Total DOSRI Loans/Advances to Total Loan Portfolio		5.42%
i. Ratio of Past Due DOSRI to Total Loan Portfolio		
j. Return on Equity		13.05%
3. Compliance with Magna Carta Credit for SMEs		
a. Percentage of total compliance with the mandated credit allocation requirement of 6% for Small Enterprises		33.43%
b. Percentage of total compliance with the mandated credit allocation requirement of 2% for Medium Enterprises		7.79%

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Chairman

Arthur V. Ty
Vice Chairman

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Vice Chairman

Margaret T. Cham

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Pascual M. Garcia, III

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Angelito M. Villanueva

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Rolando A. Rodriguez
Executive
Vice President

Jaime V. L. Araneta
Senior Vice President

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Makati City) S.S.

We, NOLI S. GOMEZ and PASCUAL M. GARCIA, III of the above-mentioned bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above statement of condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief

(Sgd) NOLI S. GOMEZ
First Vice President

(Sgd) PASCUAL M. GARCIA, III
President

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 11 July 2005, at City of Makati, affiants exhibiting to me their Community Tax Certificates No. 02437652 issued at San Fernando, Pampanga on 11 January 2005 and No. 22887853 issued at Quezon City on 17 February 2005.

Doc. No. 477
Book No. 96
Page No. CLXXXVI
Series of 2005

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PGA Cars launches the New Audi A4

THE NEW generation Audi A4 has been launched in the Philippines bristling with the latest technology available from the German luxury carmaker. In addition, the new A4 offers driving pleasure, superior levels of luxury and exciting styling-including Audi's hallmark "single frame grille".

Representing around 50 to 60 percent of the company's volume in the Philippines, the new A4 is undoubtedly the most significant new model to be launched this year.

The new Audi A4 2.0 multitronic sedan and A4 2.0 multitronic Avant (station wagon) models are now available. Soon to follow will be the A4 1.8 T (turbo) multitronic and the A4 1.8 T Quattro.

The introduction of this key model in the Philippines will see the brand strengthen and increase sales of the A4 model range, according to Miguel Coyiuto, president of PGA Cars.

"We anticipate that the new A4 will not only increase vehicle sales but will also achieve a higher premium brand positioning in the market. It will attract young, high income buyers thanks to the extensive use of clever, forward-thinking technology that is essentially documentation of our 'Vorsprung durch Technik' (Advancement through Technology) philosophy," said Coyiuto.

"The A4 Avant already leads its premium segment in Europe and we feel this new Avant model, with its competitive engine range, will capture a greater audience in the Philippines, as we work toward our goal of securing greater market share," Coyiuto added.

Maximum power

The technology of the new A4 is second-to-none with powerful yet economical 2.0 and 1.8 T (turbo) petrol engines available, providing the basis for excellent performance. All engines comply with the strict limits of the EU4 standards.

The best-selling 2.0 liter inline four-cylinder unit develops 96 kW, while the 1.8 T four-cylinder unit develops 120 kW. These engines combine high performance with a spontaneous response to every movement of the accelerator pedal and a high-level peak-torque range. The sporty Audi Dynamic Chassis converts the power delivered by these units into high-performance pleasure on every bend and kilometer of the journey.

Working hand-in-hand with these powerful engines is the new generation of Audi's ingenious 7-speed multitronic automatic transmission for front wheel drive (2.0, 1.8 T, models) and a six-speed manual for quattro (1.8 T Quattro) models.

Advanced technology

The set-up of the Audi Dynamic Chassis with four-link front suspension and self-tracking trapezoidal-link rear suspension has been completely modified and numerous new components added to create an exceptional driving experience. The rear trapezoidal links and wheel carriers, as well as the front track rods, originate from the sporty S4.

The new Audi A4 uses latest generation Electronic Stabilisation Program (ESP 8.0). This system comprises ABS brakes with electronic brake-force distribution (EBD) and hydraulic brake assist that automatically increases brake power when the driver applies the brakes in an emergency. The traction control system ASR interacts with the electronic differential lock EDL to provide efficient yaw control as the foundation for enhanced ESP safety.

Yet another new feature is the brake disc wiping function integrated into ESP which helps to keep the brake discs dry and clean at all times for maximum braking pressure.

Expressive and sporty

With its completely new and self-assured design, the striking single frame grille and the newly styled clear-glass headlights with their sweeping bottom edge and inward taper give the new Audi A4 a very different face. The trapezoidal shape of the single frame grille is continued in the more prominent contours of the engine hood.

This new generation A4 is also slightly larger than its predecessor with an additional 38mm for the sedan model and 41mm for the Avant.

Another clear demonstration of the new A4 "Advanced thinking" is the front-end styling that deliberately echoes design elements of the Nuvolari quattro coupé study. This feature is another clear signal that this model also belongs to the same family as the other new Audi models - the A8 6.0 quattro, A6 and A3 Sportback, all of which are from a distinctly new Audi generation.

The formal idiom of the Nuvolari quattro can also be found at the rear end where the low-positioned two-piece light units, which also arch a long way inwards, emphasize the horizontal design of the vehicle body.

The saloon and Avant both sit squarely on the road, the muscular-looking bottom section and very flat window area combining to produce sports car proportions.

The new generation of steering wheels incorporating the single-frame grille design first used in the new Audi A6 offers either multifunction, multifunction with paddle shift, multifunction sports or multifunction sports with paddle shift.

Door sill trims with aluminum inserts and numerous aluminum inlays are a standard feature of all new A4 versions.

Luxurious interiors

The well-formed ergonomics of the previous generation is also to be found in the new Audi A4. The cockpit and interior surround the driver with generously sweeping horizontal lines that flow from the dashboard into the door area. There is also more room than average for luggage. With a capacity of 460 liters, the smooth-floored luggage compartment is well-equipped for tackling challenging transport tasks. Depending on the version, the Avant offers up to 1,184 liters of space (with the rear seat folded down).

The high standard of comfort and quality is evident from the high-grade materials and excellent finish of the interior.

Comprehensive occupant protection systems-including two-stage front airbags and active head restraints-together with the highly complex, latest-generation ESP provide high reserves of safety.

In the Philippines, the official importer and distributor of Audi Cars is PGA Cars Inc. The new Audi A4 2.0 multitronic sedan and Avant may be viewed at PGA Cars' new Audi showroom along 201 Edsa, Mandaluyong City. For more information, call PGA Cars at 727-0381 to 85, or log on to www.audi.ph.

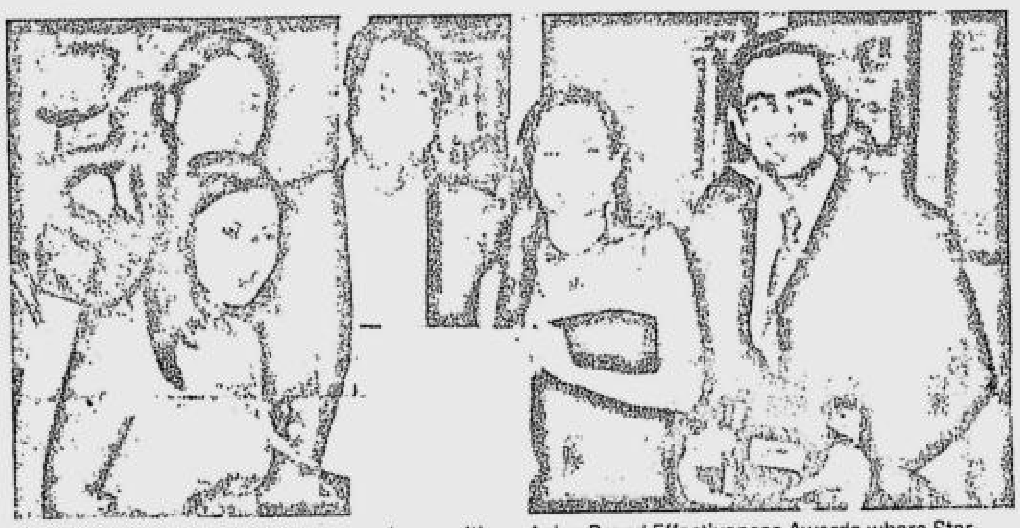
Starcom awarded Shortlists in 2005 Cannes Media Lions

STARCOM Philippines, together with key client Procter & Gamble Philippines, yet again scored big wins in recent international advertising awards behind their Rejoice "Sumusunod sa Galaw Mo (Hair Follows Your Every Move)" song and dance music marketing-a campaign launched to popularize Rejoice Reviving variant March 2004. Fresh from Cannes, Rejoice Reviving Shampoo was among the top 3 percent shortlisted amongst thousands of entries, being a finalist in two Cannes Media Lions categories: "Best Use of Television" and "Best Use of Mixed Media"; it also won the Gold Award for "Most Effective use of Branded Content" in the recently concluded Asian Brand Marketing Effectiveness Awards held in Singapore.

The brand was faced with a saturated and little differentiated hair care market in the Philippines, and the challenge was to break through the clutter by engaging consumers through a single-minded, passion-based marketing communication in order to achieve higher awareness and trial for the new product. The Rejoice strategy was to recreate another Macarena-style dance craze to deliver the brand's message of making hair smooth and lively. Insight established that novelty songs (i.e. catchy songs accompanied by simple addictive dance moves) are not only popular in Filipino pop culture, but that good ones become national dance crazes. Leveraging on this, Starcom created a sustainable media property "Rejoice Sumusunod sa Galaw Mo Song & Dance" media innovation that would form the perfect marriage of content and context, demonstrating the key benefit "hair that follows your moves" across media platforms.

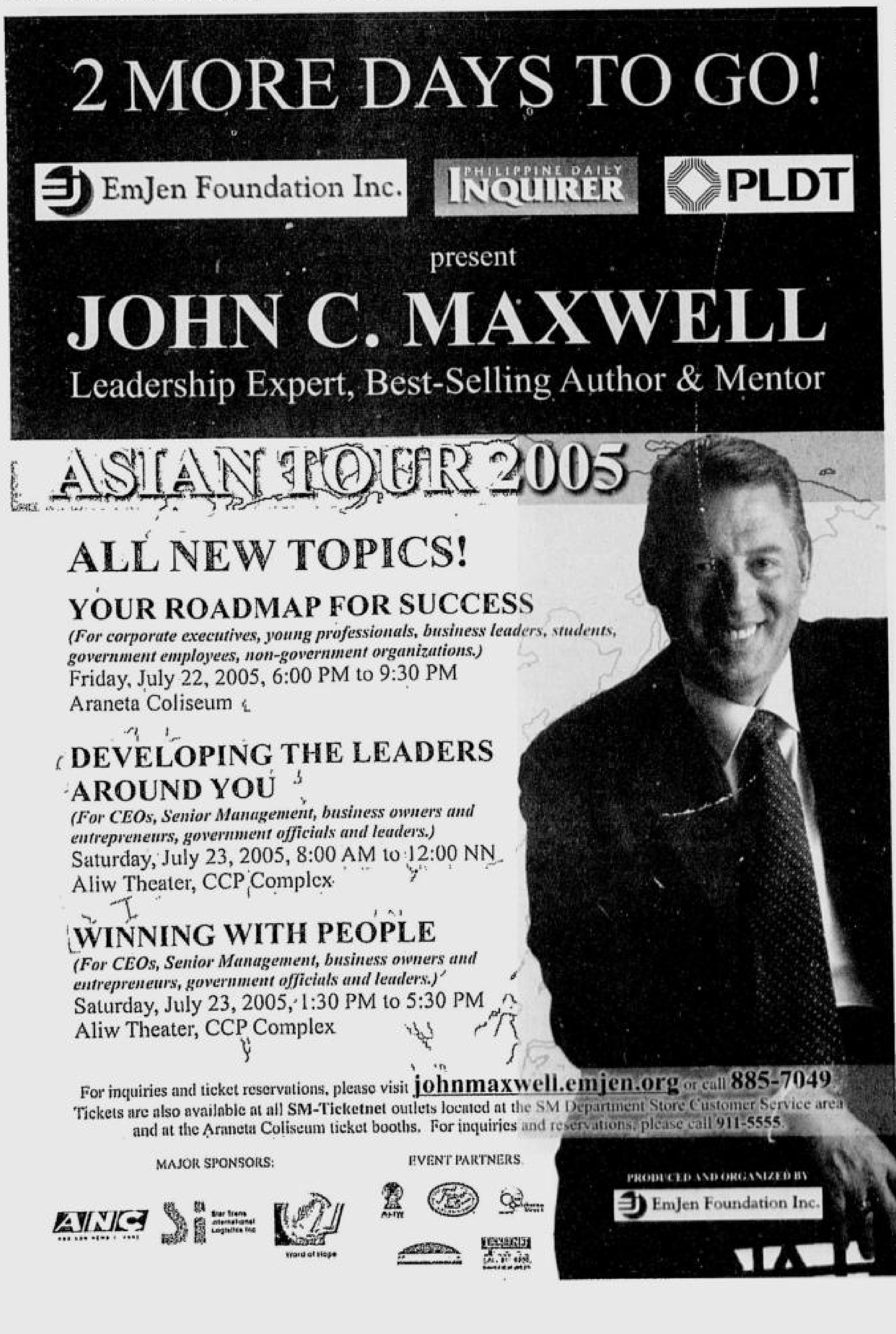
Besting usual portion buys/sponsorships/vignettes, Rejoice would be the first shampoo to redefine consumer engagement, integrating the key message into every execution of the campaign-song lyrics even to the signature, hair-flipping dance moves.

Lauded as a holistic media innovation, Rejoice became a benchmark for successful execution of branded entertainment and consumer engagement. A brand-specific, danceable tune-"Rejoice Sunod sa Galaw" led to a branded MTV for compelling visuals of the complete routine. Since its successful launch, it has spawned an unprecedented "following" with many other brands (e.g. deodorant, feminine wash, laundry brand, dishwashing liquid) employing music marketing locally, and has been rolled out in other Asean markets regionally.



STARCOM Philippines' delegates are shown with Procter & Gamble Philippines country media manager Pauline Roxas-Chua during the recent Asian Brand Effectiveness Awards where Starcom Philippines won Gold in the most effective use of branded content.

Deemed as a first in the market, the Rejoice music marketing media campaign swept numerous local and global awards in the past year, receiving recognition from Cannes Media Lions as a finalist for best use of TV and best in mixed media, Clio Awards finalist best in content and contact, Asian Brand Marketing Effectiveness Awards Gold award most effective use of branded content, P&G Global Awards (best achievement in brand building-Abbie's) best media team, P&G Asian Brand Building Awards (Abba) Awards Best Media Innovation. P&GP president Johnip Cua cites Rejoice as a "truly great idea (that) is able to travel across borders."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Ipsos expands regional network in Asia-Pacific

IPSOS, the world's third largest survey-based market research group, has extended its network to include two new offices in the Asia Pacific region.

The international company announced the recent opening of start-up offices in the Philippines and Hong Kong. This brings up the number of Ipsos office locations in Asia Pacific to 14.

The two new offices are under the direction of the executive director of Ipsos in Asia Pacific Steven Altman. The Philippine office is managed by senior director Lou Ramoran, a former director of AC Nielsen, and the Hong Kong office by general manager, Alice Page. Alice previously set up Incepta Marketing Intelligence's offices in Hong Kong and Shanghai.

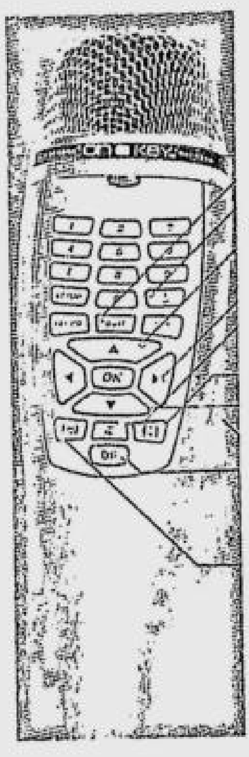
Commenting on the start-ups, Richard Mecchi, CEO of Ipsos in Asia Pacific, stated: "We are delighted to announce the launch of these two new country offices. Ipsos in the Philippines increases our coverage in the important southeast Asian market while Ipsos in Hong Kong will incorporate the luxury division, working closely with Ipsos in Paris, focusing on high net worth individuals and a range of products and services specially designed for this market."

Founded in 1975, Ipsos is owned and managed by research professionals. The company has been publicly traded since 1999. In 2004, Ipsos generated global revenues of 606 million euros.

On-Key Videoke Mic now in RP

THE WINNER of USA Today and Business Week Best Products Award, the new On-Key Videoke Microphone from Video Vox, is now available locally, offering exceptional multiple entertainment features designed to give you that ultimate singing experience with real-time performance scoring based on pitch and timing. Now with its built-in cache of songs that includes not just English but also popular Tagalog OPM (Original Pilipino Music) hits. On-Key Videoke Microphone has On-key Pitch Correction that automatically adjusts and corrects your pitch even while singing, so you're assured never to sing off-key and out of tune. In addition, On-Key Videoke Microphone not only allows you to duplicate your voice to sound like a duet but also shifts the pitch in real-time so you can sing in perfect harmony with a virtual partner. At the same time, you can change the speed or key of the song to fit your vocal range.

Furthermore, it has Voice Transformation that transforms kids' voices into adults or even change male voices into female, and vice versa. Aside from these, it also has five adjustable pro-quality reverb settings that can simulate the acoustics of singing on-stage, in the shower, inside a house, a stadium or even up on a mountain top. What's more, with the On-Key Videoke Microphone you can plug into any PC and download songs via the Internet to as much as 100 additional new songs. On-Key Videoke Microphone is exclusively distributed by Video Vox Philippines. For details, call 725-6772, 744-1031, or 721-2877.



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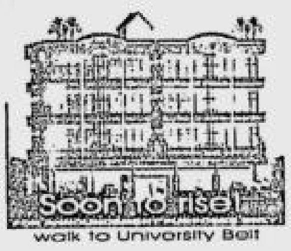

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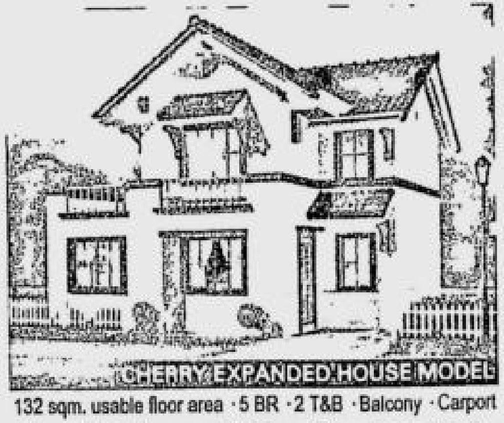

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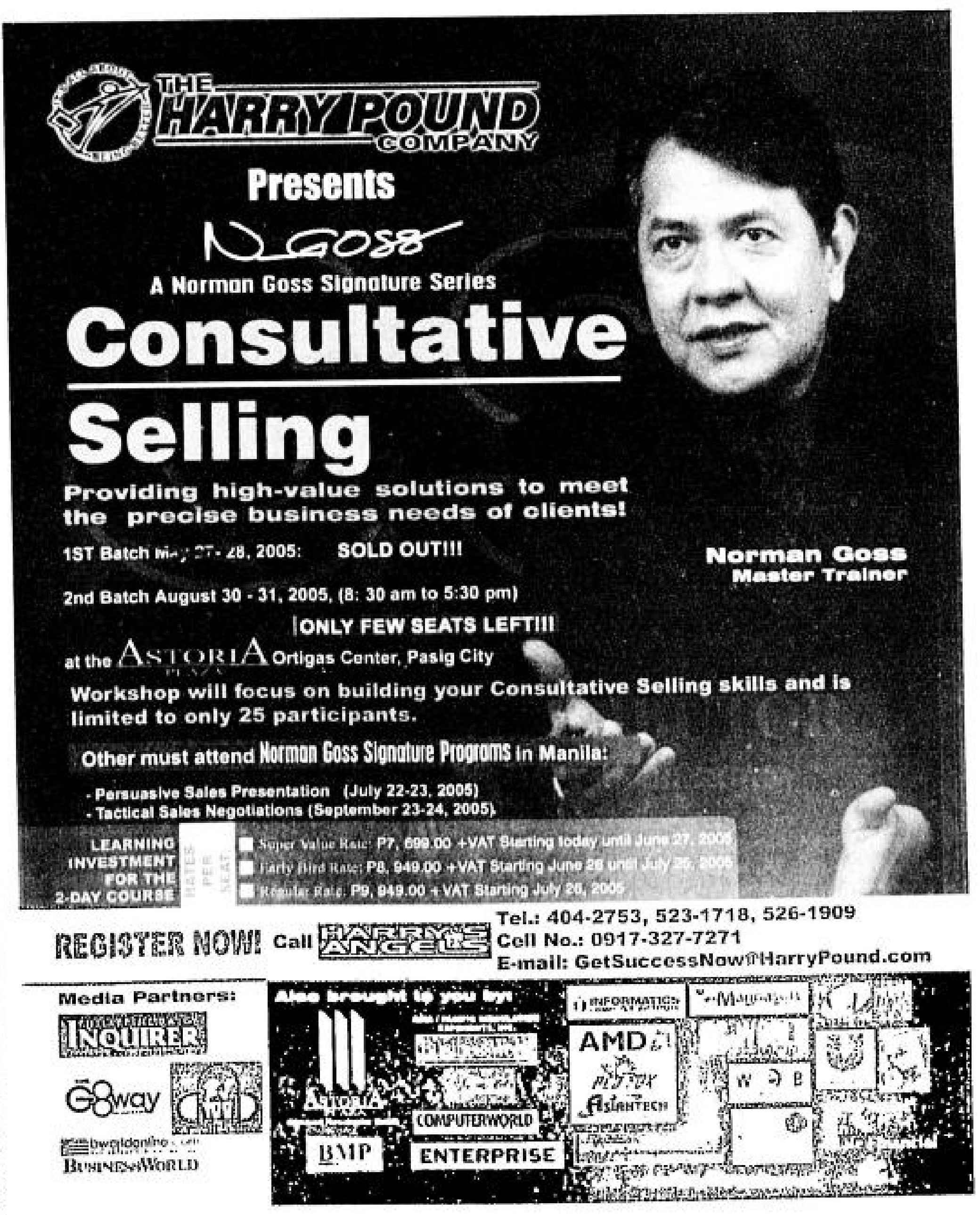

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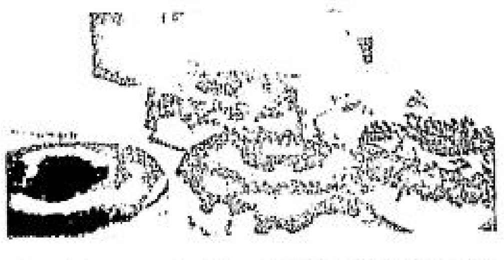

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OBITUARIES

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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RT. REV. MSGR. ALFREDO C. YLLANA, P.A.

of the Archdiocese of Caceres
returned to his Father's House on July 18, 2005.

He also served the Archdiocese of Manila as guest priest after his retirement.

His body lies in state in Chapel A, Christ the King Parish Greenmeadows, Quezon City.

On Friday, July 22, the body will be flown to Naga City where it will lie in state at the Good Shepherd Chapel Archbishop's Residence. The Funeral Mass will be celebrated on Sunday, July 24 at 2:00 PM at the Peñafrancia Parish Church, to be presided by Archbishop Adolfo Tito Yllana, Papal Nuncio to Papua New Guinea, immediately after which the burial shall take place in the Peñafrancia Catholic Cemetery.

Msgr. Fred was preceded to the Eternal Kingdom by his brothers and sisters **Maria, Jose, Msgr. Florencio, Adolfo, Andrea, Sr. Maria Andrea (Milagros), Rafael,** and **Dolores**. His surviving nieces and nephews request the pious reader to pray for his soul.

The Lord is my Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want. (Ps 22[23]:1)

God has you in His keeping; we have you in our hearts ...

IN LOVING MEMORY
on the Sixth Death Anniversary of

MOONYEEN R. ABESAMIS-AYACHE

Who passed on to Eternal Life on July 20, 1999
The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass shall be offered today, Wednesday, July 20, 2005 at the following Churches:

Philippines	
Garden of Love, Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City	4:00 p.m. Mass
Miraculous Medal Parish, Project 4, Quezon City	6:00 a.m.
Monastery of St. Clare, Katipunan Road, Quezon City	6:00 a.m.
Sta. Maria dela Strada, Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City	6:00 a.m.
Transfiguration of Christ, 18th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City	6:00 a.m.
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, 13th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City	6:30 a.m.
St. Ignatius de Loyola Parish, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City	6:00 a.m.
St. Joseph Shrine, Aurora Boulevard, Quezon City	7:45 a.m.
St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Peñaranda, Nueva Ecija	6:00 a.m.
La Resurreccion Parish, Victoria, Laguna	6:00 a.m.
Mother of Perpetual Help Parish, Cabanatuan City	6:00 a.m.
Ubanon Church, Ubanon, Catbalogan, Samar	5:00 p.m.
San Bartolome Church, Catbalogan, Samar	5:30 a.m
Japan:	
Koza Catholic Church, KAMARA 1-4-1, Okinawa, Japan	8:00 a.m.

We, her parents, **Justice & Mrs (†) Bernardo P. Abesamis**, husband **Rudy**, daughter **Micah Aubrey**; brothers **Atty. Ferdie, Atty. Edmund, Engr. Jun, Atty. Al & Quezon City Councilor Rommel**; sister **Dr. Gigi Abesamis-Recasata**, in-laws, nephews and nieces, uncles and aunts, request readers, relatives and friends to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

I have fought
the good fight,
I have finished
the race,
I have kept
the faith
(2 Timothy 4)

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

NINI MERCADO HENSON

(01 October 1963 – 06 July 2005)

wish to express our
heartfelt thanks to you
for having been with us in our
time of bereavement
with your presence,
your prayers, your flowers,
your message of sympathy,
your Mass card,
your concern and your love.
God Bless!

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
Matthew 11:28

CLASSIFIEDS

SUBIC BAY METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Building 255 Barryman Road, Subic Bay Freeport Zone, Philippines 2222
TEL. NOS. (047) 252-4270 * 4214 * 4124 FAX NO. (047) 252-4284
SBMABAC-INV-002-05

JULY 8, 2005

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

All parties interested to bid for the below-listed items are invited to apply for application for eligibility and to bid with the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA), Subic Bay Freeport Zone. Only eligible contractors/suppliers will be invited to participate in the bidding of the below-listed items:

A.

Items	DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET
ITEM I	OFFICE SUPPLIES (LOT)	P 1,597,977.98
ITEM II	HARDWARE AND ELECTRICAL SUPPLIES (LOT)	P 313,856.95
ITEM III	TABLES AND CHAIRS, HIGH QUALITY PLASTIC (LOT)	P 374,000.00
ITEM IV	NINE (9) UNITS VEHICLE, PASSENGER WAGON	P 6,390,000.00
ITEM V	ONE (1) YEAR CONTRACT FOR PHOTOCOPYING SERVICES	P 2,100,000.00

Scope of Work : The SBMA seeks for a photocopying firm capable of providing complete solution to its photocopying requirements which shall be on a rental/lease scheme for the period of one (1) year.

The firm to be engaged for the services shall provide the SBMA with the latest technology in reproduction photocopying equipment or machine that will satisfy the requirements of the SBMA photocopying needs, and ensure that all the equipments are in perfect working condition at all times and all throughout the duration of the contract by regular preventive maintenance program and repair service(s) as required.

B. Complete Information/requirements of the subject items to bid and the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the project will be provided upon issuance of bidding documents to all applicant suppliers/contractors.

C. Application Particulars for Eligibility for submission by Interested Suppliers:
1. Articles of Incorporation
2. Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) Registration (if in case of Corporation)
3. Certificate of Registration with the Dept. of Trade and Industry (if not corporation)
4. Valid Mayor's Permit
5. VAT Registration
6. Audited Financial Statement for the last two (2) years, 2003 and 2004 (should be stamped "received by" BIR, certified true copy in sealed envelope)
7. Company Profile
8. List of projects (past and present)
9. List of Clients
10. Prospective Bidder's statement that he is not "blacklisted" from any other government/ private companies.
11. Tax Returns (duly stamped received by the BIR) and Tax Clearance
12. Prospective Bidders shall certify under oath (Sec. 23.8 or RA 9184):
    - that each of the documents submitted in satisfaction of eligibility requirements is an authentic and original copy or a true and faithful reproduction or copy of the original; complete; and
    - that all statements and information therein are true and correct.
13. Authorization of Official Signatory (duly notarized)

D. Issuance of Bidding Documents and Site Inspection is on **July 25, 26 and 27, 2005 up to 5:00 p.m.** at the cost of **P1,500.00** which is non refundable.

E. Pre-Bid Conference schedule is on **July 27, 2005 (Wednesday), 2:00 p.m.**

F. Deadline for submission of Eligibility Requirements, Technical and Financial Proposals, Opening of Bids will be announced during the Pre-Bid Conference.

All particulars relative to the eligibility process, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR) of RA 9184 otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act".

SBMA reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any defect therein and accept the offer it deems most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) ATTY. JOCELYN G. ALVARADO
BAC Chairman

For inquiries please call:
BAC Secretariat
Tel. No. (047) 252-4210 / 4283
Fax No. (047) 252-4284/4251
PPMD Office
Bldg. 225, Barryman Road
Subic Bay Freeport Zone

(PDI – July 12 & 20, 2005)

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WORLD FOOD SUMMIT
SEMINAR ROOM A

AUGUST 3 (DAY 1)
11:00AM How to Manage Your Catering Business (P300)
2:00PM How to Choose a Safe & Roadworthy Truck for Your Business by BSB Group Inc
3:00PM Hydrocolloids, stabilizers for baking, food, sauces application by Camdon Industries Inc.

AUGUST 4 (DAY 2)
1.00PM The World Needs Filipino Bartenders by Asian Bartending Academy
3:00PM A Guide To Metal Detection in the Food Processing and Packaging Industries by Handyware Phils
4.00PM Frenchbaker Seminar (with fee)

AUGUST 5 (DAY 3)
1.00PM Getting into the Donut & Ice Cream Business by Handyware Phils.
2:30PM Sanitation & Preventive Maintenance in the Food Industry by Handyware Philippines
3.00PM Fruit & Vegetable Carving by HRCAP (P500)

AUGUST 6 (DAY 4)
1.00PM Seminar by Ajinomoto Philippines
2.00PM Asian Cuisine &Plating with ISCAHM (P500)

SEMINAR ROOM B

AUGUST 3 (DAY 1)
12:00NN Ensuring the Success of Your Marketing Plan by Josiah Go, President Mansmith & Fielders Inc.
2:00PM Computerization of Financial & Manufacturing Processes of SMEs by ABM Computech
3:00PM All About Franchising by RK Franchise Consultancy

AUGUST 4 (DAY 2)
1.00PM J Channel Ingredients Workshop/Seminar on Meat Processing

AUGUST 5 (DAY 3)
12:00NN HACCP Seminar by Certified International
1.00PM Halal .... Designing the Future of Food Industry by Most Institute
3:00PM International Trends in Catering by Sunnex
4.00PM Proper Handling of LPG by Petron Gasul Corp.

AUGUST 6 (DAY 4)
1:00PM Live Life Better.... Healthy Weight Management by Mind, Body & Soul
2:00PM Getting into the Cart Business by Sam's Balls Inc.
3:00PM Success Secrets of Chinese Traders by Chefs Pride
4:00PM How to Start a Meat Processing Plant

Co-Located Events
BAKER'S FAIR
TASTE EXPO
FOODMACH 2005 Expo
WORLD FOOD SUMMIT

TASTE EXPO

AUGUST 3 (Wednesday- DAY 1)
11:00AM Halal Cooking with International Chefs by Most Institute
1:00PM Thai Cooking with BNL Inc
2:00PM Culinary / Baking Demo by Scanasia Overseas Inc.
3:00PM Grand Liquored Coffee Challenge with the Philippine Bartender's League (PBL)

AUGUST 4 (Thursday -DAY 2)
11:00AM Halal Cooking with International Chefs by Most Institute
1:00PM Coffeology by Robert Francisco, Boyd Coffee Co
3.00PM Hotel &Restaurant Chefs Association of the Philippines (HRCAP) Market Basket Challenge
5.00PM Demo by Asian Bartending Academy

AUGUST 5 (Friday -DAY 3)
11:00AM Candies & Marmalade by Spices & Foodmix
12:00NN Demo by Gardenia
1:00PM Cooking with Mega Sardines
2:00PM Cooking Demo by MCN Distributors, Inc.
3:00PM Master Flairtending Competition - The Next Level with the Philippine Bartender's League (PBL)

AUGUST 6 (Saturday DAY 4)
11:00PM Culinary Competitions by Cook Magazine
3:00PM Baking Demo by Del Monte Philippines
4:00PM Ice Cream Scoopetition by Nestle Philippines

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

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Premier Events Plus Group Inc. (PEPGroup) and the Philippine Bartenders League (PBL) will host two major beverage competition in World Food Expo 2005 (Wofex) to be held this Aug. 3 to 6 at the World Trade Center, Manila, Philippines. The Grand Liquored-Coffee Challenge and The Master Flairtending Competetion... The Next Level presented by Danessi Coffee, Pal Sweet by Ajinomoto Philippines, Gomeco Metal Corp. and Multi-Mach will showcase the talents of professionals bartenders from all over the Philippines. Wofex is an annual trade exhibition with over 700 exhibitors and over 10,000 product display. Shown are Mutley Matilla, president-PBL; Joel Pascual, President-PEPGroup; Boydee Dizon, Chairman PEPGroup; Joe Cabauatan, Sec-Gen.-PBL; Randy Manaloto, VP-Finance-PEPGroup; Jojo Argones, Secretary-PBL; Michael Crisologo, Consultant-PEPGroup, Executive Chef, Enchanted Kingdom Foodservice. For more info, call PEPGroup at 4269603, 4354790, 9280931, 9297993 or 63, or check website at www.wofex.com or email info@PEPGroup.com.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

BID AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
(Head Office)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS (BSP) invites Consultants to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid for the **Architectural and Engineering (A & E) Design Consultancy Services** for the proposed BSP Branch Building in Butuan. The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) for this consultancy services is P5.63 Million.

The scope of the work includes among others the preparation of plans, specifications and detailed estimates to include architectural, electrical, mechanical, structural, electronics and communication, plumbing/sanitary and landscaping works as specified in the Terms of Reference.

The minimum eligibility requirements are as follows:

1.0 The firm must have been in operation for the last fifteen (15) years (reckoned from the date of the first advertisement/posting of this invitation) engaging in the lawful practice of the type of consulting services called for in this invitation.

2.0 The firm must have rendered within the last ten (10) years (reckoned from the date of the first advertisement/posting of this invitation) A&E design Consultancy Services for at least three (3) completed new construction projects of similar nature like office buildings, banks, exchanges and financial institutions of similar or greater magnitude as the proposed BSP project and must be able to submit a certification of satisfactory performance from the client for at least two (2) of the required three (3) projects.

3.0 The Principal or Managing Officer must be a Registered Architect with at least fifteen (15) years experience in architectural design and coordinating team efforts in A&E design.

4.0 The key personnel should be Registered Architect/s, Civil Engineer/s, Professional Mechanical Engineer/s and Professional Electrical Engineer/s with at least ten (10) years design experience.

5.0 The firm (partnership/corporation/joint venture) must be at least 60% owned by a Filipino citizen, (Foreign consultants must be registered with SEC and/or any agency authorized by the laws of the Philippines.

6.0 In case of a joint venture, a valid joint venture agreement shall be required. The joint venture must have rendered A and E Design Consultancy Services for at least two (2) completed projects of similar magnitude as the proposed BSP project.

7.0 For those firms with previous or current Design Consultancy Services with the BSP, a certificate of satisfactory performance issued by the Bank must be submitted.

The quality-cost based evaluation procedure stipulated in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA No. 9184 shall be adopted for this consultancy service requirement.

Eligibility documents may be obtained from the BAC Secretariat on **July 21 to 29, 2005** for a non-refundable fee of P200.00, Room 204, 2nd Floor, Five Storey Building at the BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Streets, Manila and must be submitted duly accomplished to the same office not later than 4:30 p.m. on **August 05, 2005.**

The provisions of **Republic Act No. 9184** and its Implementing Rules and Regulations relative to the bidding and award of contract shall apply.

BSP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive defect or any formality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any consultant/s whose bid/s is/are evaluated to be most advantageous to BSP. Furthermore, BSP is not obliged to compensate/indemnify the consultant for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bid nor does it guarantee that an award of contract will be made.

(Sgd.) **JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI–July 20 & 28, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
City of Olongapo
-0-
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
General Services Office, 2/F City Hall Complex
Tel./Fax No. 047-222-2699
Web: www.olongapocity.gov.ph
Email: Olongapo@piol.net

July 11, 2005

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The City Government of Olongapo through the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites contractors to apply for the eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Janitorial Services for Various City Government Buildings as follows:

Lot No.	Location	No. of Personnel
1	City Hall	4
2	James L. Gordon Memorial Hospital	20
3	Convention Center	5
4	Gordon College	7
5	City Mall	11
6	City Museum	2
	Total	49

Contract No. : OC-076-CMO-001-05 GD
Brief Description : Janitorial Services
Approved Budget : Php5,421,239.00

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to the Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR)

COMPLETE SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

DATE	ACTIVITIES	VENUE
July 11, 2005 to July 25, 2005	Posted at Olongapo City Website, GEPS Website and Conspicuous Places	
July 25, 2005 to Aug. 01, 2005	Issuance of Bid Documents upon payment of non-refundable bid form fee of P4,500.00 8:00 am to 5.00 pm from the BAC Secretariat	BAC Secretariat 2/F Gen. Services Office, Olongapo City Hall
Aug. 01, 2005	Pre-Bidding Conference at 10:30 am	
Aug. 12, 2005	Opening of Bids at 2:00 pm	
Aug. 15, 2005	Bid Evaluation	
Aug. 16, 2005	Post Qualification	
Aug. 17, 2005	Notice of Award	

The BAC reserves the right to accept and reject any bid and to cancel all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the City Government without thereby incurring any liability whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids and obligation to inform the bidder(s) of the ground(s) for the basis of BAC's action

(Sgd.) **MERLITO J. MAJARUCON**
Head, BAC Secretariat

NOTED BY:

(Sgd.) **JOHNNY B. CHOA**
BAC Chairman

(PDI–July 13 & 20, 2005)

PAG-IBIG FUND

Corporate Headquarters
The Atrium of Makati
Makati Avenue, Makati City

Circular – Letter
Series of 2005

TO : **ALL NCR BRANCHES / REGIONAL OFFICES / SUB-REGIONAL & EXTENSION OFFICES / COLLECTING AGENTS**

Notice is hereby given regarding the loss of the following Pag-IBIG Fund Receipts which were issued to Lakeside Nest Realty Inc. and were declared lost per Affidavit of Loss executed by its Vice-President, Mr. Serapio B. Lucero on June 01, 2005:

E6079394
E6079478
E6079481
E6079588
E6079630
E6999601
E7770659
E7770718
E8488193
E8729036
E9246364
E9246431

Said PFRs are hereby cancelled and payments under said PFR series will not be honored by the Fund.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. ROMERO FEDERICO S. QUIMBO**
President & Chief Executive Officer

June 08, 2005

(PDI–July 13, 20 & 27, 2005)

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Transportation & Communications
LAND TRANSPORTATION FRANCHISING
& REGULATORY BOARD

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR
Number 2005-022

Subject : FARE REGULATION FOR METRO MANILA AIRCONDITIONED BUSES

WHEREAS, it has come to the attention of the Board that immediate increase of fare rates of Air-Conditioned Public Utility Buses (PUB) in Metro Manila is being implemented without any authority from this Board;

WHEREAS, the Honorable Supreme Court enunciated in the case of *Kilusang Mayo Uno Labor Center vs. Hon. Garcia, et al.*, dated 23 December 1994, that the Legislature delegated to the defunct Public Service Commission (now, LTFRB) the power of fixing rates of public utility vehicles (PUV). This Board, the existing regulatory body today, is likewise vested with the same under Executive Order No. 202, dated 19 June 1987. Section 5 thereof specifically empowers this Board to ***"determine, prescribe and approve and periodically review and adjust reasonable fares, rates and other related charges, relative to the operation of public land transportation services provided by motorized vehicles;"***

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court further declared that nowhere in the provisions of the Public Service Act and EO 202 would authorize any other entity (a common carrier, a transport operator, or other public service) to regulate fares, except PSC and now, LTFRB. It likewise declared that further delegation of such power would indeed constitute a negation of such duty in violation of the trust reposed in the delegatee mandated to discharge it directly. The policy of allowing PUV operators to change and increase/decrease their fares at will would result not only to a chaotic situation but to an anarchic state of affairs. This would leave the riding public at the mercy of transport operators who may increase fares every hour, every day, every month or every year, whenever it pleases them or whenever they deem it necessary to do so;

WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) issued Department Order No. 2002-77, dated 05 December 2002, the whole portion of which reads, thus:

> "It has been observed that the "deregulated fare policy" for the air-conditioned bus services has resulted to unfair and cutthroat competition between operators of ordinary/regular passenger buses and operators of air-con buses, which ultimately translated into degradation of service efficiency and/or dislocation of services.
>
> In view thereof and in order to ensure sustainability in bus operation, the LTFRB is hereby instructed to issue standard fare advisory not only to regular services but to air-conditioned bus/PUJ services as well. The premium for air-conditioned services shall at least be twenty percent (20%) more than the fares authorized to regular services;"

WHEREAS, the DOTC likewise issued Department Order No. 2005-010 , which took effect on 27 May 2005, setting forth the Policy guidelines on the Exercise of Authority and Functions by this Board and empowering it to amend or modify, in part or in its entirety, existing Department Order/s previously issued by DOTC governing the powers and functions provided for in Section 5 of EO 202;

WHEREAS, the Board issued Memorandum Circular No. 2005-020 (Re: Board's Policy On The Regulation Of Fares Of Public Utility Bus Air-conditioned Service), dated July 7, 2005, advising and warning public utility air-conditioned bus operators to refrain from charging fare increases and decreases without seeking authority and approval of the Board;

WHEREAS, the Board, through received and validated complaints. discovered that PUB Aircon fares for the first five (5) kilometers is thirty-eight percent (38%) higher than PUB Non-aircon fares after the granting of fare increase last 09 May 2005 and fifty percent (50%) higher prior to the granting of PUB non air-conditioned fare increase.

WHEREAS, the Board is mindful of its duty to protect the investment of the public utility bus operators;

WHEREAS, the Board is also guided by the principle that the paramount consideration in the issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience (CPC) is public convenience;

WHEREAS, the primary purpose of fare regulation by the Board is to secure an adequate and sustained service for the public at the least possible cost, and to protect and conserve investments already made for this purpose;

WHEREAS, the Board is duty-bound to assess and determine based on market forces affordable fare rates and viable to the operators and the riding public;

NOW, THEREFORE, this Board, in the interest of the riding public and pursuant to the aforesaid decision of the Supreme Court, Department Order Nos. 2002-77 and 2005-010, and Memorandum Circular No. 2002-020, hereby issues a Fare Regulation for all Metro Manila public utility air-conditioned bus operators as follows:

For the first five (5) kilometers	**- PhP 10.00 (25% difference from Eight Pesos [PhP 8.00] of PUB non-aircon)**
Succeeding kilometer/s	**- PhP 1.75/km (no difference from PUB non-aircon fare)**

The implementation of the fares indicated above are subject to the following conditions:

1. All franchised Metro Manila Air-Conditioned bus operators are required to secure a Fare Matrix in the amount of Fifty Pesos (PhP 50.00) per unit and P40.00 for Franchise Verification record. The P50.00 fee shall entitle the operator to an original copy of the fare matrix where the plate number of that particular unit is indicated therein and the landmark of every kilometer;
2. All Metro Manila Air-Conditioned bus operators shall post in conspicuous places inside their buses and terminals or stations the aforesaid original fare matrix for the information of the riding public and to avoid disputes between passengers and conductors as to the amount of fare to be paid;
3. The elderly and the disabled are entitled to a 20% discount on fares all year round upon presentation of their duly issued Identification Cards (IDs);
4. Students are entitled to a twenty percent (20%) discount upon presentation of their duly issued identification cards from their schools. However, students can only avail of the 20% fare discount during the school year, from Mondays to Fridays. Student discounts cannot be availed of on Saturdays and Sundays, legal holidays, summer and Christmas breaks. Graduate School Students and the like are not covered by the said fare discount;
5. Children three (3) feet and below shall be free of charge and shall not be allowed to sit on the lap of his/her adult companion for safety purposes. Operators are therefore required to provide a measuring device (e.g. tape measure, yardstick and the like) set up on the vehicle entrance to serve as a guide;
6. Failure to comply with the requirement of posting the fare matrix and giving discounts to the elderly, disabled and students shall subject the erring conductors and operators to the imposition of the corresponding fines and penalties pursuant to existing LTFRB and LTO rules and regulations; and,
7. Overcharging and/or undercharging passengers shall be penalized with the corresponding penalties as set forth in said MC No. 2005-020.

This Memorandum Circular supersedes any and all issuances inconsistent herewith, and takes effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in a newspaper of general circulation or the filing of three (3) copies hereof with the UP Law Center, pursuant to Presidential Memorandum Circular No. 11, dated 09 October 1992.

SO ORDERED.

Quezon City, Philippines. JULY 19, 2005

MARIA ELENA H. BAUTISTA
Chairperson

FELIX S. RACADIO
Board Member

GERARDO A. PINILI
Board Member

(PDI–July 20, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Transportation and Communications
LAND TRANSPORTATION FRANCHISING AND REGULATORY BOARD
East Avenue, Quezon City

PROVINCIAL BUS OPERATORS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHLIPPINES (PBOAP)
In representation of its Members –

Case No. 2005-0412

BACHELOR EXPRESS, INC.,
BALIWAG TRANSIT, INC.,
VICTORY LINER, INC.,
PARTAS TRANSPORT INC.,
PHILTRANCO SERVICE ENT. INC.,
ET AL.,

Applicants,

x--x

DECISION

This is an Application for Authority for Fare Adjustment of Provincial Non- Air-Conditioned (Regular) Buses filed by herein applicant on April 20, 2005

In the application filed by PBOAP, it prayed to charge the following fare rates for their NON-AIR-CONDITIONED buses:

Provincial Utility Bus Regular (Nationwide)	**FROM**	**TO**	**%**
Minimum (1st 5 Km.)	P6.00	P9.00	50%
Succeeding Km.	P1.10	P1.30	19%

The Board issued a Notice of Hearing dated April 21, 2005 for the Application for Authority to Adjust Passenger Fare Rates for PUB Regular Service filed by PBOAP setting said application for hearing on May 17. 2005.

On the scheduled date of hearing, petitioners represented by counsels Atty. Jose A. Galsim and Atty. Orlando P. Viray, Sr., appeared. The Office of the Solicitor General likewise appeared through Atty. Herminigildo Dumlao II. Petitioners presented the jurisdictional facts/requirements and the same were admitted by the Board. Counsels for petitioners prayed that they be given a period of ten (10) days within which to file its Memorandum/ Position Paper, which this Board granted. The Office of the Solicitor General was likewise given a period of ten (10) days within which to file its Position Paper. Thereafter, with or without such pleadings this case shall be submitted for resolution on the basis of the evidence so far presented.

In the Application and Amended Application filed on April 20, 2005 and May 16, 2005, respectively by herein petitioners, it averred that other operational costs of applicants have likewise been increasing correspondingly since 2004, such as the wage increase and the grant of ECOLA amounting to P50.00, and the increase of government fees, like the LTO registration fees, which affected the viability of the operations of the transport operators. Other items and factors, which were considered in the approval of the recent increase of fares on PUB Regular in Metro Manila and PUJ like the peso devaluation, increase of government fees and other operational expenses.

In the Opposition and Position Paper filed by the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG), which contains almost similar arguments. It cited once again the landmark case for rate fixing of Kilusang Mayo Uno Labor Center vs Garcia, 239 SCRA 386. It argued that the contentions of the applicants are unfounded because they proceed on the premise that the ever-increasing fuel costs resulted in increased operational costs, but it failed to present evidence to support their affirmative allegations. It averred that the propose fare increase appears to be burdensome, a moderate increase in the fare rate seems sufficient and will still bring a reasonably good return for investment for the operators and drivers. It likewise argued that the burden of showing that the proposed schedule of rates is fair and reasonable, that it is not confiscatory and discriminatory, which the applicants failed to do. On the technical side, it questioned the authority of the Alejandro R. Yague, President of PBOAP to file the original and/or amended Application. It was not supported by a Board Resolution duly passed by the Board of Directors of the PBOAP.

This Board finds the present application for fare increase of PBOAP to be impressed with merit and tenable.

Considering the series of events, which are matters of judicial notice, the Board is now left without any recourse but to grant the present applications. This Board just recently approved the application for fare adjustment filed by FEJODAP, Et. Al. for Public Utility Jitney Service and INTERBOA, IMBOA Et. Al. for Regular Public Utility Buses in Metro Manila as per Decision issued by this Board on May 9, 2005.

We are now adopting the basic justifications as cited in the most recent decision approving the applications for fare increase. The basis of the recent decisions for both PUJ and PUB Regular in Metro Manila was the successive increase of fuel (diesel) that occurred during the period of last fare hike up to the present. In the last fare increase, as per Decision in LTFRB Case No. 2004-0677 dated May 25, 2004, the cost of diesel was P18.83 per liter. This has now jumped to P27.90 per liter or an increase of forty eight percent (48%), the highest jump ever given such short period of time. The twenty percent (20%) given to elderly, disabled and students as mandated by the Board should likewise be considered.

The Toll Regulatory Board likewise increased its charges in both North Luzon Expressway and Southern Luzon Expressway by more than two hundred (200%), which fully burdened the bus operators

It must be stressed that the impact of Expanded Value Added Tax (EVAT) Law which will take effect on July 1, 2005 and the oil industry projections for the year was highly considered in the approval of this Application for Authority to Adjust Passenger Fare Rates for Provincial PUB Regular Service.

WHEREFORE, pursuant to and in accordance with Section 16, sub-section (c) of the Public Service Act and Section 5, sub-section (c) of Executive Order No. 202, the Board authorizes the fares for provincial PUB Non-Air-Conditioned as follows:

	FROM	**TO**	**%**
Minimum (1st 5 Km.)	P6.00	P8.50	42%
Succeeding Km.	P1.10	P1.30	19%

The implementation of the fares indicated above is subject to the following conditions:

1. All franchised provincial regular bus operators having been benefited by this DECISION, are all deemed to have applied for a fare increase and shall pay the Board the corresponding filing fee of P520.00 (inclusive of one (1) original copy of fare matrix) per case number plus P50.00 per authorized unit in excess of one unit and P40.00 for franchise verification record. The P50.00 fee shall entitle the operator to an original copy of the fare matrix where the plate number of that particular unit is indicated therein and the landmark of every kilometer.
2. All provincial regular bus operators shall post in a conspicuous places inside their buses and terminals or stations, the aforesaid fare matrix for the information of the riding public and to avoid disputes with drivers and conductors;
3. The elderly and the. Disabled are entitled to a 20% discount on regular fares all year round upon presentation of their duly issued Identification Cards (IDs);
4. The students are entitled to a 20% discount on regular fares upon presentation of their duly issued identification cards (IDs); However. students can only avail of the 20% fare discount during the school year from Mondays to Fridays. No student discounts on Saturdays and Sundays; legal holidays; summer and Christmas breaks. Graduate School Students and the like are not covered by the said fare discount.
5. Children three (3) feet and below shall be free of charge when riding provincial PUB Regular service and shall not be allowed to sit on the lap of his/her adult companion for safety purposes. Operators are therefore required to provide a measuring device (e.g. tape measure yardstick and the like) set up on the vehicle entrance to serve as guide;
6. Failure to comply with the requirement of posting the fare matrix and giving discounts to the elderly, disabled and students shall subject the erring drivers and operators to the imposition of the corresponding fines and penalties pursuant to existing LTFRB and LTO rules and regulations;
7. Overcharging and/or undercharging passengers shall be penalized with the corresponding penalties prescribed for the said offenses by this Board:

This Decision shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in a newspaper of general circulation or the filing of three (3) copies hereof with U.P. Law Center, pursuant to Presidential Memorandum Circular No. 11, dated 09 October 1992.

SO ORDERED.

Quezon City, Metro Manila. JULY 06, 2005.

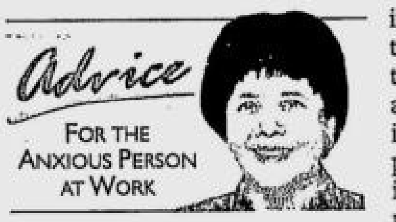
MARIA ELENA H. BAUTISTA
Chairperson

FELIX S. RACADIO
Board Member

GERARDO A. PINILI
Board Member

(PDI - July 20, 2005)

Is politics of unity a naive proposal?


Advice
FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

By Tita Datu Puangco

THE POLITICS of unity you propose is naive. How do you expect people with different viewpoints and perspectives to meet? You sound like the CBCP (Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines). What is your position? Is it for or against Gloria? To take the middle ground is not to have a stand.

Opposition Member

We like your proposal of a politics of unity. My officemates and I attended the prayer rally. The speakers made it clear they want to pray for peace and unity and not play politics. We felt good praying side by side with ordinary people like government employees, vendors etc. Is this the way to go? What do we do after the crisis? What else can be done?

Peace Rallyist

Thank you for your letters. Is a politics of unity a naive proposal? I followed over television the two rallies, that of the opposition and the other for peace and unity led by local governments. There are many differences in the tone and views expressed. But I can also see many similarities. The politics of unity begins with understanding the things that unite both groups rather than things that divide them. Both groups claim to work for the common good and the interest of the country. Both are passionate about wanting the country to change for the better. Can we channel these energies and passions to a dialogue that seeks solutions? My stand is clear, I am for creating bridges between the two sides.

Earlier, I proposed a multisectoral meeting of leaders from all camps to fashion out a national agenda for reforming our institutions and developing right leaders. The results or outcomes are then cascaded to different levels down to the grassroots for consultation. I don't agree with the elitist view that consultations happen only with those who pay taxes. For we know that a just and equitable society can only happen if the voice of the poor, the weak and the powerless is heard. The process may be tedious and cumbersome but the conversations are vital for building consensus and unity.

Unity in prayer

We are a prayerful nation. Prayer was also a common denominator in both rallies. Brother Eddie with his group kicked off with remarks on God and country. The other rally was opened by prayers from representatives of the different religions and denominations. I remember that Jesus in the Gospel asking the Father, "that they may all be one as you and I are one." All politics of unity meetings should begin with intense prayer. We all know that nothing is impossible with God. With his presence, everything is possible.

I noted the tone of the Luneta rally. It was meant not to inflame or incite negative reaction but thoughtful reflection. Yes, it is the way to go, to defuse confrontation and appreciate one another's convictions. It is unfortunate that the television coverage was rather sparse. But the politics of unity should not only happen during moments of crises. It has to be a regular dialogue between the citizenry and their chosen leaders. It is making decisions and actions of politicians transparent, so that citizens can give them feedback. We have to be able to write, e-mail or text them. We have to do our duties as citizens. Our politicians can therefore focus on doing projects and programs for the common good. It is also taking them to task when we note corrupt practices.

For example, talking of the Countrywide Development Fund or the "pork barrel." We see many good projects sponsored by our legislators in the provinces. We can praise them for their choices. But let us also warn them about receiving kickbacks that line their pockets. Only with constant interaction can democracy really work.

Formation

The politics of unity is also about education and formation of people. We know that the outcome of elections in our country is determined by the *masa* of our people, who are often exploited by politicians or other interest groups. Probably nongovernmental organizations and foundations for the poor or even the basic ecclesiastic communities of the Church can assume the formation advocacy. Through proper information and education, the *masa* can learn to pursue decisions or actions that empower them and make them less vulnerable.

Then, again politics of unity means listening to the "voice of Mindanao." Whenever I go to the other cities, people always talk about the dominance of "Imperial Manila." This is an issue that is always mentioned but no effective action is undertaken. Can the Constitution change respond to this? We know politics has many nuances and many voices. I am sure the politics of unity cannot happen overnight. But it can begin with this crisis. All of us, but most specially our politicians, have to do soul searching and ask themselves, can we unite for the common good and the good of our country?

(Ms Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send feedback through e-mail to advice@ancillaedc.com.ph *or fax to 892-2902.)*

Retail manager sets trends in fashion

ALL ABOUT WORK

By Candy G. Villanueva
Contributor

LIKE most little girls, Karen Lozon loved playing with her Barbie dolls when she was younger. But unlike other kids, she wasn't contented with just brushing their blond locks or dressing them up with outfits that came with their boxes. More than playing dress up, she occupied her time designing clothes for her Barbie dolls. It was almost an obsession that indicated her passion for her work later on. "I loved dressing and accessorizing them up and just kept on looking at them until I fell asleep. My Barbie dolls are my prized possessions, and I still have all of them intact," shares Lozon.

As retail manager for Urbanwear Inc., Lozon graduated from Barbie dolls to real life mannequins. From dressing up dolls with three-inch waists, this time Lozon decides what skirts and tops mannequins on the store windows of Urban & Co should wear and as a result, influence the kind of clothes stylish women in the country wear. Urban & Co, a brand under Urbanwear Inc., is a Singapore-based trendsetter that is known for prairie skirts, feminine boleros and figure-flattering halter dresses.

People and mannequins

As retail manager of Urban & Co, dressing up mannequins and deciding what color schemes and styles should be highlighted is only part of the job. She also handles overall operations from marketing, merchandising to store operations. On the merchandising side, Lozon decides which lines to order for the Philippines stores. For marketing, she takes care of promotions, PR, advertising and strategies to build awareness for the brand.

On top of merchandising and marketing, the retail manager oversees day-to-day operations in the store, which means managing people. "I've always believed that to have quality merchandise and quality service, you need quality people. This is how we would want Urban & Co to be regarded by our customers and am responsible for the overall operations of the business. It's a job that entails having to look at the big picture, yet being able to comprehend the minute details."

Although dressing up trendy women seems fun, it's not as easy as playing dress-up Barbie. Lozon takes her job seriously. Her goal as retail manager is to push the company to its fullest potential in terms of increased sales by providing excellent customer service. "I envision Urban & Co to be known not only for its up-to-date styling and figure-flattering fit but also for the quality service our sales team provides," she adds.

Familiar with fashion

Previously a model, Lozon is no stranger to the fashion business. After earning a degree on Marketing Management with a major in Psychology at De La Salle University, Lozon endorsed Rustan's Young VIP line through fashion shows, print ads, fashion consultancy, in-store selling and other social functions that promoted the line. Her brief stint in marketing a consumer product also introduced her to marketing plans, packaging, advertising and promotional campaigns.

Lozon thinks that aside from a marketing or business degree as a foundation, a retail manager should have good fashion sense and should be very interested in fashion. She says experience in fashion retail would really help because a retail manager should be familiar with the purchasing habits of the Filipino consumers—what their tastes are, what would work and what would not. She adds that objectivity is key in deciding which styles to market. A retail manager should be able to detach his or her own preferences. "One outfit may not be something I would necessarily wear, but I know it would sell like pancakes," confirms Lozon.

LOZON ROGER CARPIO

Lozon notes that creativity is also demanded in the different functions of the job, specifically in visual merchandising and marketing. "One should be able to think out of the box, and at the same time be analytical and not too radical."

Love and hate

Last week, Urban & Co opened its second branch at Glorietta and will open their third store at the Shangri-La Mall. Setting up the new branches was a harrowing experience for Lozon. "It can be very demanding. Since I was involved with the startup, there were times when I would have to give more than what I would usually give a company that has been around for a decade," she recalls.

Lozon joined Urban & Co at the most exciting time. "It's challenging, but at the same time very exciting because I've been with the company in its infancy, and now it's growing immensely." During the set up of its first store at Megamall Building B, there were days when she was physically and mentally exhausted. "On such days, it helps to have a good attitude towards work and ensure that my dedication for the company is there. I go beyond by treating Urban & Co as if it were my own business."

Embracing diversity

The job may be demanding in every sense, but Lozon embraces the job for its diversity. "It allows me to grow, as I also work towards the growth of the company. The fulfillment I get when I step back and see how much I have accomplished is priceless."

Lozon also appreciates the fact that she works in the fashion industry, which she always had a passion for. In fact, aside from her modeling stint and her brief creative stage designing for her Barbie dolls, Lozon also dabbles into designing her own accessories. "I knew I wanted to build a career in this industry, which was why I took a job in a company carrying a well-known European brand. Back then, I didn't imagine I'd have a job like that of a retail manager until I experienced a turning point in my career when I felt like I needed to spread my wings."

(E-mail feedback to candyvillanueva@pldtdsl.net)

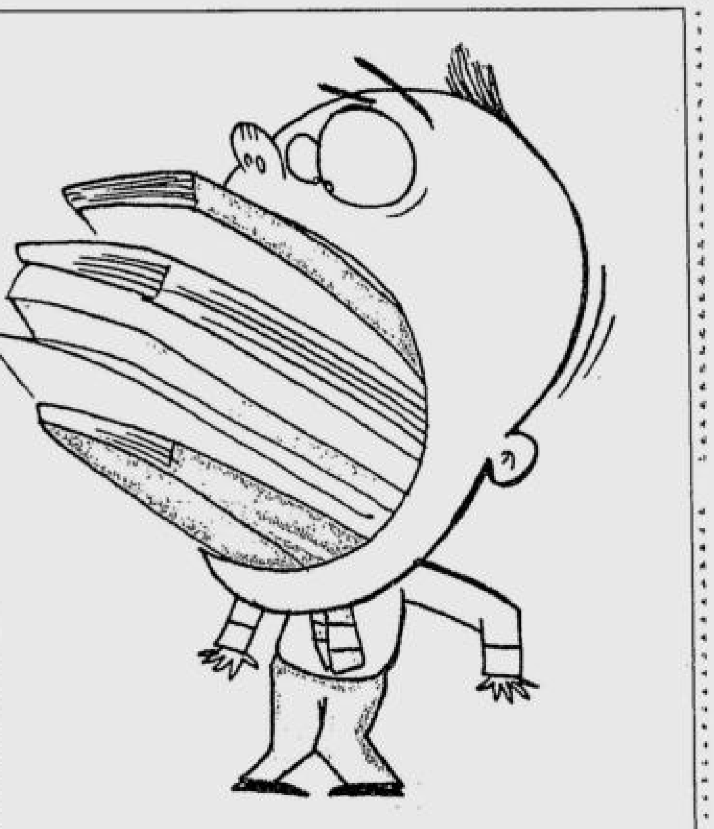
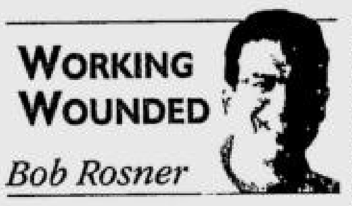


ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

How do you deal with a failing boss?



DEAR WW: What can you do when your boss is in trouble at work? Is there any way to avoid going down with him?

Sinking Ship

Your e-mail got me thinking about Brian Kline. He was playing with his dad's handcuffs from a previous job he'd had as a security guard. On Father's Day he handcuffed himself to dad to celebrate. Unfortunately, they couldn't find the key. The two of them drove to the police station where the cuffs were cut off.

Unfortunately, it will be slightly more challenging for you to cut the cuffs between you and your boss than it was for this pair. But it sounds worth the effort. I've listed strategies to help you below. For more, check out "Grace Under Pressure" by Izzo and Marsh (Broadway, 2004)

What proof do you have that your boss is really in trouble? I always like to back up my intuition with proof. Look for examples where projects have been taken away, responsibilities are shrinking or head counts are dropping more rapidly than with other departments. Also, listen to the grapevine to see if your opinions are supported by others.

Can you pursue more solo projects? Can you confide in your boss that you'd like to show people in the company your leadership skills by working independently on an important project? Or can you find a project that will help the department but that requires a bit more independence from your boss, like working on a company-wide task force. Just be careful not to blow it by telling coworkers what you are doing, going stealth here should increase your options.

Can you find a new mentor(s)? I've had my eggs scrambled far too many times to feel comfortable putting them all in one boss's basket. So even if your boss isn't in trouble, I think it's a good idea to have more than one mentor.

Can you confide to your boss about what you've heard? I've always appreciated it when people who reported to me were watching my back. If possible, this is a great thing to do. But proceed with caution. Be sure that your relationship can handle the conversation, bring it up when you are alone and your boss is in a good mood, and don't reveal your sources in the process. Realize that there is a chance that the boss could come after you and your sources, so you have to be very careful.

Should you confide in your boss's boss? Izzo and Marsh suggest this option, but I think it's potentially nuclear. Give that, there is a chance that what you say could get back to your boss, you need to be pretty darn desperate to go down this path.

Ironically, when police ran a routine background check on Brian's dad just after they took off his cuffs they discovered two outstanding arrest warrants. He was then handcuffed for real. Follow these tips and hopefully you'll be able to avoid the same fate.

Here are the results from a recent workingwounded.com/ABCnews.com online ballot: If your boss was failing, which song title would sum up your approach to the problem?

—He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother, 8.9 percent

—Cry Me A River, 11.3 percent

—You Can't Always Get What You Want, 34.1 percent

—Bye Bye Blackbird, 45.5 percent

(Mr. Rosner, an internationally syndicated columnist, author and speaker, is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. E-mail him at bob@workingwounded.com.)

Goal-oriented exec steers firm to radio ...

From page B12

of revenues, began its growth after the martial law years. Today, it has over 300 stations nationwide, including dzRH and Love Radio. "There is a lot of satisfaction in achieving targets and commercial goals, in keeping the organization moving in and also in being socially relevant. As you know, we are very much involved in public service," says Nicdao.

Two KBP terms

Describing his management style, as "participative," Nicdao, "a perfectionist who has learned to adapt," feels there is no monopoly of ideas and is therefore open to those coming from his staff. He says, I relate well to people and I have the patience to listen." He also has a knack for analysis, is good in problem solving, and has a firm grasp of ideas, traits which served him well. "My strongest motivation is challenge. It energizes me and problems make me want to work harder," says Nicdao, quickly adding that he motivates his staff by acknowledging their efforts and by expressing appreciation for a job well done.

As president of the KBP (Kapisanan ng mga Brodkasters sa Pilipinas), Nicdao, now on his second term, more or less applies the same management style. KBP is an association made up of local television and radio networks. Membership is voluntary and stands at 150 at the moment. The 32-year-old body—it was founded in 1973 by a group of journalists led by the late Doroy Valencia—is self-regulating and promulgates its own rules and regulations. "I have an executive director who attends to major projects. But KBP is actually run by committees. My job mainly is to ensure that these committees accomplish their tasks and meet their targets," declares Nicdao who allocates about 20 percent of his time to the body.

His involvement in the KBP has made it possible for Nicdao to widen his circle of influence. Furthermore, it has made him better known to the broadcasting and advertising industries. Nicdao admits that he was virtually unknown to both previously. While he considers this development a significant highlight of his career, a major highlight, he points out, was the shift it took, which happened when the Elizalde Group divested itself of its sugar business and decided to concentrate on radio and other related businesses instead. Says Nicdao, "It was a bold move which caused things to fall into place." Unwittingly, it determined and sealed his fate.

Partnership program

Nicdao takes pride in the role he has played in making MBC the most dominant radio network in local airwaves. He explains, "Our stations are number one nationwide. I would give much of the credit for this to our partnership program. In 2002, we established a partnership with our station managers. We let them run the stations and thus earn from the revenues." Needless to add, the scheme has turned out well for all concerned. Nicdao maintains this is one of the reasons why MBC has attained top ratings.

More to life

But, there is more to life than top ratings, and Nicdao couldn't agree more. "My family is my priority," he says, referring to Joyce, his wife of 25 years and to their two boys and two girls. Nicdao's happiest moments are those spent with his wife and children. His wife, Joyce, incidentally, is a doctor who has opted to keep her private practice small in order to have more time for her family.

Now that he has achieved all his goals in terms of employment, Nicdao feels it might be time to start working on a lifelong dream. He says, "It's my ultimate goal actually. I would like to be an entrepreneur because I believe it's the only way I can have financial independence." Considering his track record, it won't be surprising to see him succeed as an entrepreneur as well.

Success is not always defined in tangible terms. "It has a bigger meaning," contends Nicdao. Because he is family-oriented, he feels success should extend to the people one is closest to, such as one's family. He avers, "Success is how you live your life, how you raise your children. You cannot be successful if your children are not good Christians and decent human beings."

PEOPLE at WORK

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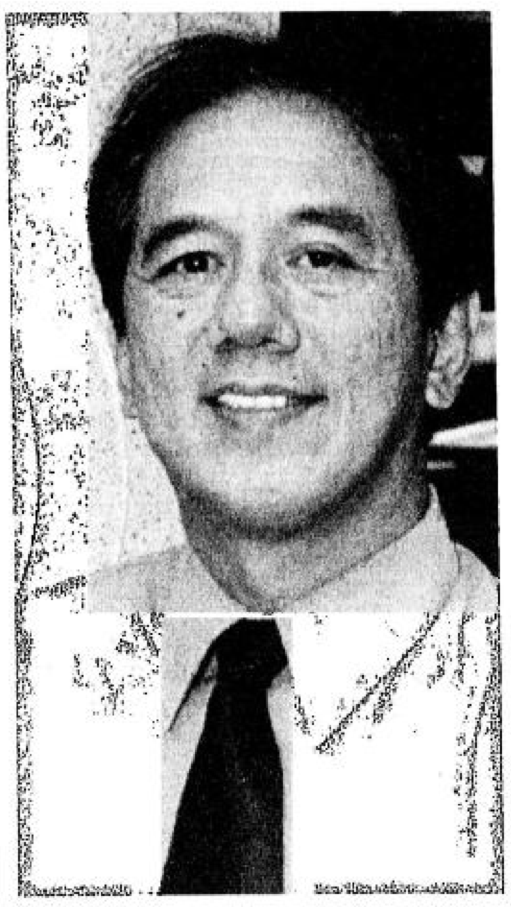
Goal-oriented exec steers firm to radio dominance



NICDAO RUDY ESPERAS

By Cecile G. Garcia
Contributor

AT 50, Ruperto S. Nicdao Jr. believes he has achieved his major goal, namely, to have a successful career in business management. The executive claims he knew what he wanted at the outset, and this became his focus, a goal he planned and prepared for and zealously pursued.

CAREER TALES

Nicdao presently serves as president and COO of the Manila Broadcasting Company (MBC), the largest radio network in the country. He assumed both positions in 1995. He says, "I run MBC. Basically, the biggest challenge I face in my job is that of pushing the company and the medium as well."

Excellent training

Clearly unfazed by this challenge, Nicdao points out that graduate school had been an excellent training ground for him. "It prepared me for this job," he avers, meaning, of course, his stint at the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) where he obtained his MBA. "I had set my sights on going to AIM because of the many success stories I had heard about its graduates," he adds. Previously, he had gone to De La Salle University where he took up Liberal Arts-Commerce (LiaCom), a five-year course which he was able to finish in four years through the Accelerated Honors Program. Majoring in Math, he graduated magna cum laude.

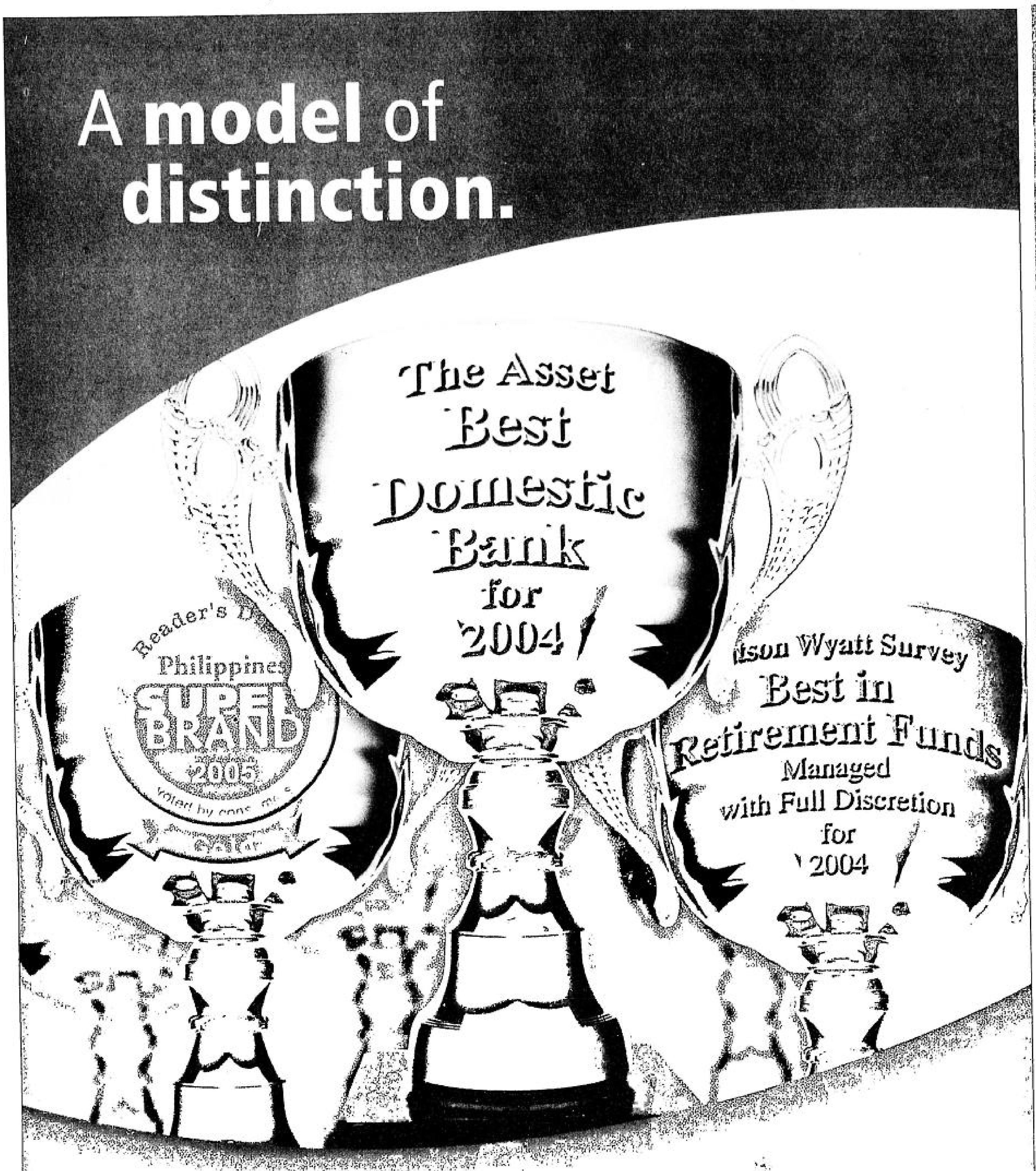
Shortly after graduation, Nicdao obtained employment at SGV (SyCip, Gorres and Velayo). It didn't take long before he was recruited by MBC, which was in need of a finance manager. Nicdao was VP for finance when he was pulled out by management and moved to another company, the Philippine Sugar Marketing Corp., which together with MBC, was part of the Elizalde Group of Companies. He was eventually recalled to MBC to take over its helm. Incidentally, he is also a director of Star City and other companies.

Highly professional company

Family corporations are as professional as they come, Nicdao has found out in his 28 years with the Elizalde Group. He says, "Management makes it a point to hire competent people and the organization is highly professional. The culture is paternalistic and there's not much politics. Advancement is based on merit. People tend to stay."

Goal-oriented, Nicdao has guided MBC through hard times, steering it toward growth and high ratings. "I always set goals way ahead and make sure they are achieved," he contends. MBC, which is third only to GMA 7 and ABS-CBN in terms

GOAL-ORIENTED/B11



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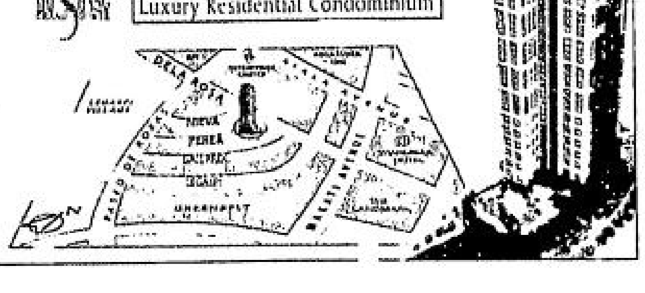

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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Father, son bonding proving successful at AF3

DADO says his father gives him 100 percent support and is always happy with whatever place he ends up with.

By Charles E. Buban

DECIDING to pursue a career in motorsports racing is one news your family would certainly welcome albeit with anxiety.

After all, who would want to see you taking the track at break-neck speed with only your skills—and perhaps luck—protecting you against the numerous misfortunes that could befall even the most seasoned of drivers?

So when 17-year-old Dado Peña announced last year he is going to participate in Asian Formula 3 (AF3) race, he needed some support from his father, who knows all too well the risks Dado is about to face.

Jose Eduardo (Eddie) Peña, who chairs AF3 and is considered the main driving force behind the formation of the sport in the region, also knew it was only a matter of time before his son would follow in his footsteps.

"I remember giving Dado a cadet kart as a present on his 11th birthday. When it arrived in our house at around 8 p.m., he kept on driving it until 1 a.m. I know it was the beginning because once you get the (racing) bug its really very difficult to stay away," he recalls.

On the right track

Buoyed by Dado's brewing enthusiasm, his father decided to start him out in karting.

"Many racing legends started out in karting since it's the best training sport for so-called 'open-wheel' car racing," says Eddie, who himself began karting at the age of 18.

At first, Dado would just shadow his father. "But when he started going faster, I decided he needed a more formal training," Eddie relates.

It was the turning point in Dado's career and he never looked back.

His first professional kart racing in 2000 (the Philippine Cadet 65 Karts) got him in 5th place. The next year, he finished first overall in the Philippine Junior KT Karts, which was followed by another first overall finish, this time, in the 2002 Asian Zone Kart Championship.

Trying his luck

Then after a stint at the Formula BMW Asia Series, Dado decided to try his luck in the AF3 racing last year.

His inaugural AF3 race went smoothly as he finished 4th overall in the Promotions Class category and 2nd overall in the Philippine National Formula 3 category.

This year, the Ambi Pur Team Goddard-Minardi Team Asia driver is aiming for a much better position.

"I am feeling much more confident this year," Dado says, adding he and his team have a way of communicating that is necessary for success.

"We don't ever have to really talk. I can actually look at them and tell what they're thinking. They look at me and just nods their head, like 'I know what you mean.' You've got to have that," he says.

No conflict

Dado, who is now a senior at Brent International School, makes sure his racing isn't conflicting with his academic career.

"Well, my father always tell me that if I want to succeed in anything in life, I have to give my best effort, be disciplined and organized," Dado shares.

His father also thank Dado's school for being supportive, considering that racing for AF3 would require his son to be absent for more than a week, many times.

Eddie also advises his son to really learn how to block out all the other things that could take him away from his focus (whether during the race or when he's studying his lessons).

"Mental focus is a very important skill in maintaining consistency," he says.

Background in motosports

Dado is also thankful of his father's racing experience, saying unlike other fathers of race drivers, he understands better how the racing works.

Says Dado: "What I most appreciate about having my father on the road is consulting him for additional knowledge. He's a lot smarter about racing than I am and the best thing has been being able to learn from him."

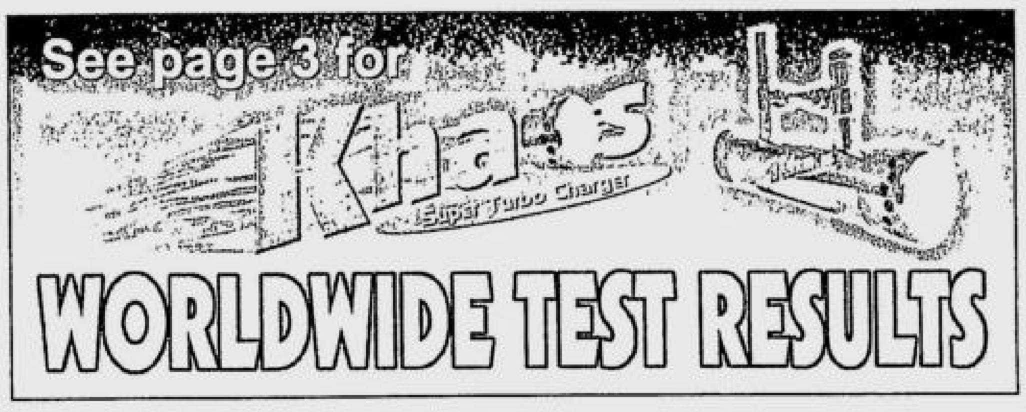
"We get along so well and he tends to do things the way I would do it, so there really is any conflict," Eddie shares.

Apart from being agreeable, the two really appreciate being able to work together and don't take it for granted.

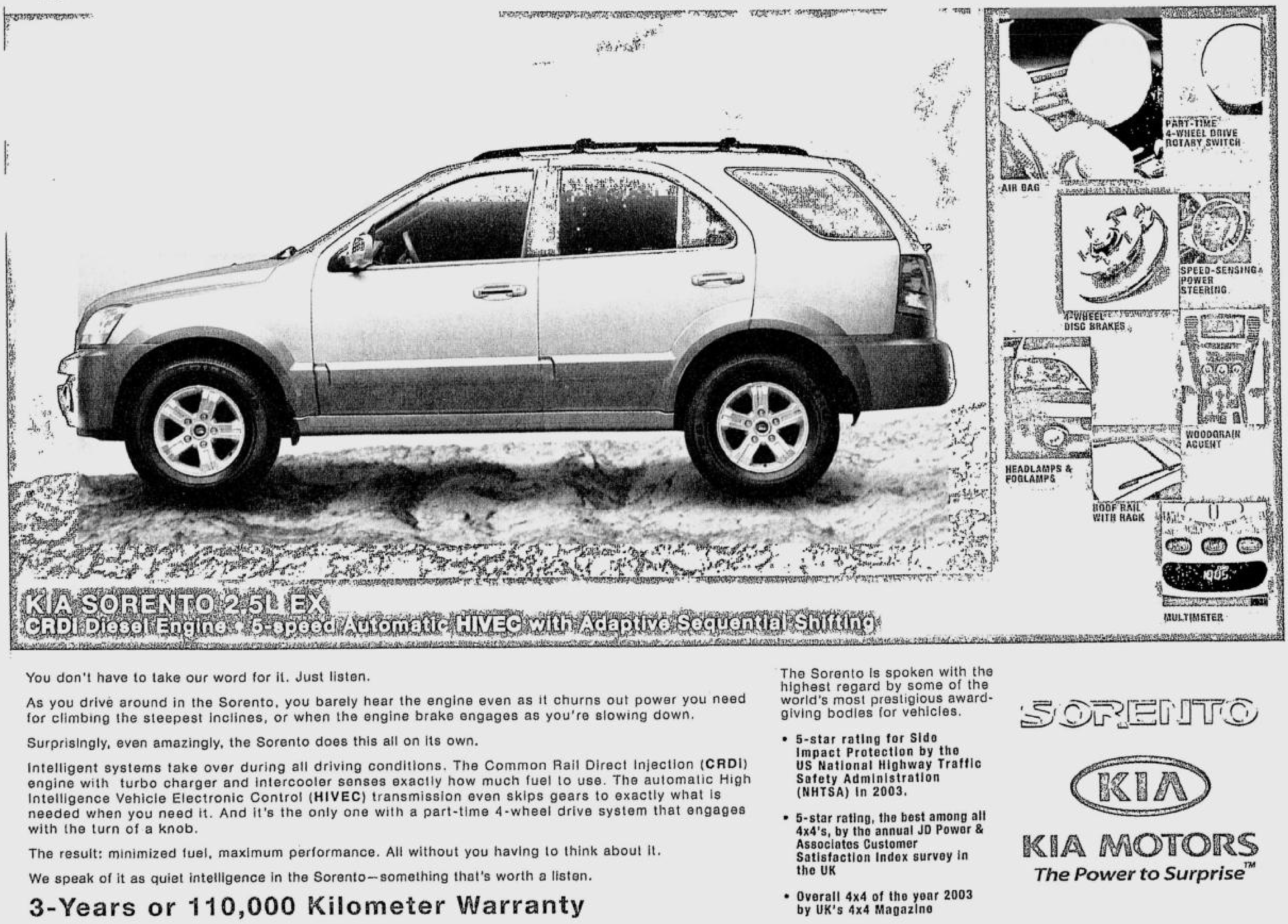
"The best part about working with my dad is the unspoken communication we have. Maybe it is a father-son thing that no one else can get, but we can just look at each other and know what it is getting ready to happen or what the scenario calls for," Dado says, adding that whenever his father is there at the pit, he gives him 100 percent support and is always happy with whatever place he ends up with.

Eddie says, "The best part about working with Dado is I get to see him develop as a person, learn his job and blossom into something. Dado started basically knowing nothing about racing and now he's great driver. I've gotten to see that whole transformation and it is really nice."

EDDIE really appreciates being able to work with his son and seeing him transform into a mature driver at a very young age.


See page 3 for
Khaos
Super Turbo Charger
WORLDWIDE TEST RESULTS

QUIETLY, IT SPEAKS OF INTELLIGENCE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- Overall 4x4 of the year 2003 by UK's 4x4 Magazine

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Foreign automakers' execs land in Leyte

By Tessa R. Salazar

SEVENTEEN Germans landed in Leyte in the evening of July 27, gamely hopping into three smoke-belching jeepneys, and chuckled at the good humor of a Mercedes-Benz logo plastered on the hood of the ubiquitous public utility vehicles.

The foreigners asked just one question about the political storm currently raging in Manila at that time. It was, "So what's up with Gloria?" When the accompanying local journalists supplied the answer, the delegates merely shrugged and asked nothing more of it.

Delegation

Heading the delegation were top-level executives of DaimlerChrysler AG, makers of Mercedes-Benz automobiles, Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge, Maybach and Smart. Also on hand were journalists from Singapore and Germany. The destination: Leyte State University. The items on the agenda: Abaca farms and processing centers as well as rainforests. It was certainly an unusual grassroots-level trip for executives of an ultra-tech automaker.

But we would find out later that the farther two technologies from two contrasting worlds come from, the more remarkable the results would be. And this would apply even for cultures.

Industrialized production

A sizeable portion of Leyte's abaca production is used in the Mercedes-Benz A class, and the Germans/DaimlerChrysler engineers were in town to help production facilities in Leyte go up the next level and proceed to the industrialized production of abaca, according to Dr. Michael Inacker, vice president for external affairs and public policy of DaimlerChrysler.

DaimlerChrysler researchers boast of more than 15 years of research in natural fiber innovation. It is, so far, the only automotive manufacturer to use high-performance abaca fiber on the exterior of a vehicle.

WITH LSU's Dr. Milan are DaimlerChrysler's Inacker, Kohler and Euronatur's Hutter

After passing all DaimlerChrysler functional tests, the abaca fiber became part of the Mercedes-Benz A-class coupé, which started production in September 2004. It is the first exterior use of natural fiber on the Mercedes-Benz A-Class, particularly in the underfloor protection.

Abaca is the first natural fiber to meet stringent quality requirements for components used on the exterior of road vehicles, especially with regard to resistance to stone strikes, exposure to elements, and dampness.

Performance testing

Prof. Herbert Kohler, DaimlerChrysler vice president for research body and powertrain, and chief environmental officer, explained how performance testing can be stringent. He said several steps of process and material improvement were necessary to attain the internal standards of DaimlerChrysler.

Kohler simplified the process by citing numerous material and functional tests such as durability, temperature, gravel test, smell test, water passage test, and additional testing with aged parts and evaluation of long-running vehicles.

He also cited the soil submersion test between glass fiber reinforced samples, abaca fiber reinforced samples and abaca fiber reinforced samples with sealed cut edge.

The automaker has already been using natural fibers such as flax, hemp, sisal and coconut for several years in its vehicles' interiors.

Production of the glass fiber, the material previously used, consumed a great deal of energy. The use of abaca fiber brought about primary energy savings of 60 percent or more.

Partnership project

The public-private abaca partnership project involves Leyte State University (represented by president Paciencia Milan), Germany's University of Hohenheim (Professors Friedhelm Goeltenboth and Werner Muehlbauer), and German Development and Investment Agency, Euronatur (represented by European Nature Heritage Fund president Claus Peter Hutter). DaimlerChrysler has specifically expressed that it requires up to 70,000 tons of abaca fibers each year, to which Leyte Gov. Carlos Jericho L. Petilla, who was guest of honor at the LSU presentation, promised to meet. He later disclosed, however, that Leyte province needed 4,000 more hectares to be converted to abaca plantations to meet local and international demands.

DaimlerChrysler has spent 6 billion euros the past year, or 60 million euros a day, just for research and development.

In the Philippines, DaimlerChrysler is represented by Cats Motors Inc.

Fortuner queue benefiting Alterra?

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

I'M SURE you and I lustily cheered when it was announced that the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) would soon undergo a facelift similar to that of the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX).

About time, I screamed.

I am from the North and Sol Juvida, the love of my life, is from the South. So, every now and then, I'd go visit my roots in Mangatarem, Pangasinan, using the modernized NLEX, or trek to down South via SLEX to renew ties with Sol J's kin and friends in Calauag, Quezon.

Each trip would always prove different.

Smooth would always be the word to describe my trip going up North mainly because of the NLEX. These days, it will take me only about two hours and 40 minutes from my Quezon City home to my hometown—easily a reduction of more than an hour from my old traveling time before the NLEX got refurbished. When I travel at dawn, I cover the 177-km route in only a little over two hours. The new NLEX, indeed, has become a boon to Northerners like me.

I can't say the same to the Southerners.

The SLEX is in an utter state of disrepair that travel there is a hassle more than a happy ride. The only redeeming factor at SLEX is the Skyway that's why I also keep praying that the Skyway will also be extended soon. Up to Calamba, maybe?

* * *

The orders keep coming and Toyota Motor Philippines has a problem that I'm sure it loves to welcome anytime.

"We now have a backlog of almost 4,000," said TMP vice president Danny Isla, referring to the best-selling Fortuner. "But we can't complain. And our patrons will understand, as always."

The Fortuner is manufactured in Thailand. An average of 270 units arrives here every month. The queue for those wishing to own a Fortuner is up to November. I heard some impatient Fortuner lovers have started switching to Alterra, Isuzu's new babe.

If you ask me, if a product is really that good, the wait will always be worth it.

* * *

Like Metro Manila, Shanghai is now also plagued by traffic and pollution.

Shanghai, known as the Sin City before Chairman Mao's communist victory in 1949, has almost 3,000 skyscrapers today after it had been redesigned in the '80s. It is now called the New York of Asia.

Residents of Shanghai, which is China's richest city today, have begun a passionate love affair with the automobile. The longing for cars has triggered filthy air, stress-filled life and sharply-rising oil consumption.

With the bicycle cult virtually gone, the ambitious, material-driven Chinese are switching to the automobile as the new status symbol, according to New York Times' Howard W. French.

About 12 percent of the world's energy demand goes to China but China consumes more than four times the global rate. If China doesn't change its ways, China's environmentalists foresee ecological and economic doom.

Shanghai has shown stubbornness amid threats of ecological as well as economic turmoil. Today, the 70 to 80 percent air pollution plaguing Shanghai comes from automobiles as the rise of the car culture remains unchecked.

* * *

Shanghai today has this troubling, albeit flourishing, consumer culture that equates car ownership, however costly, "with personal freedom, prestige and success."

French cites Yu Qiang, a 31-year-old salesman, who bought a Chinese-made Buick for $20,000 last year and uses it to go to his office, abandoning public transport altogether.

French quotes Yu as saying: "In China, everybody wants to have a car, and I'm just one of them. We think of it as changing our lives. A new subway line will soon open in my neighborhood. But I'll keep driving my car, though. It's more comfortable because I can listen to music, use the air-conditioner, and it's not crowded."

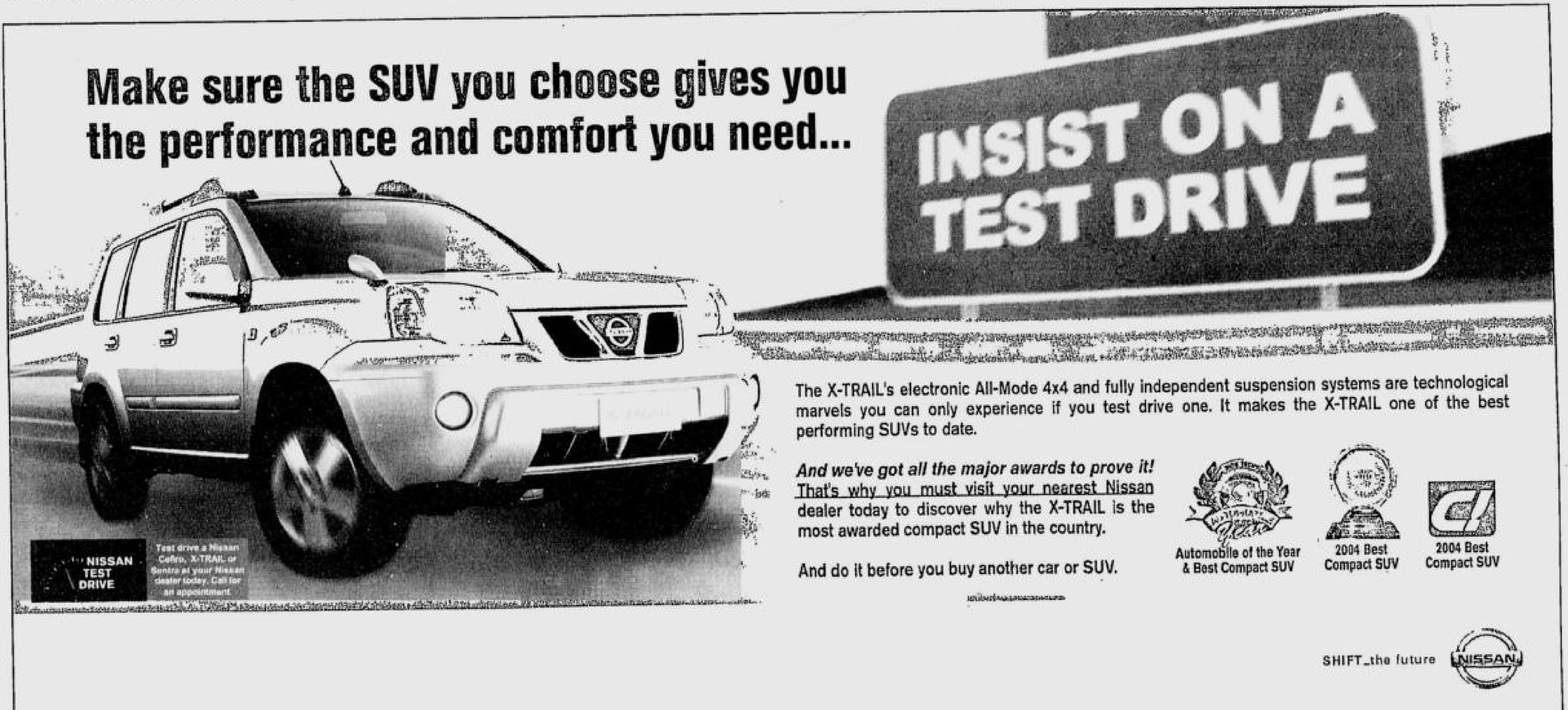
It doesn't matter that Yu negotiates the 12-km route to his office in one full hour due to traffic.

* * *

QUOTE ME: Music, not a drink, keeps you awake while driving.

* * *

E-mail comments to menju@pldtdsl.net.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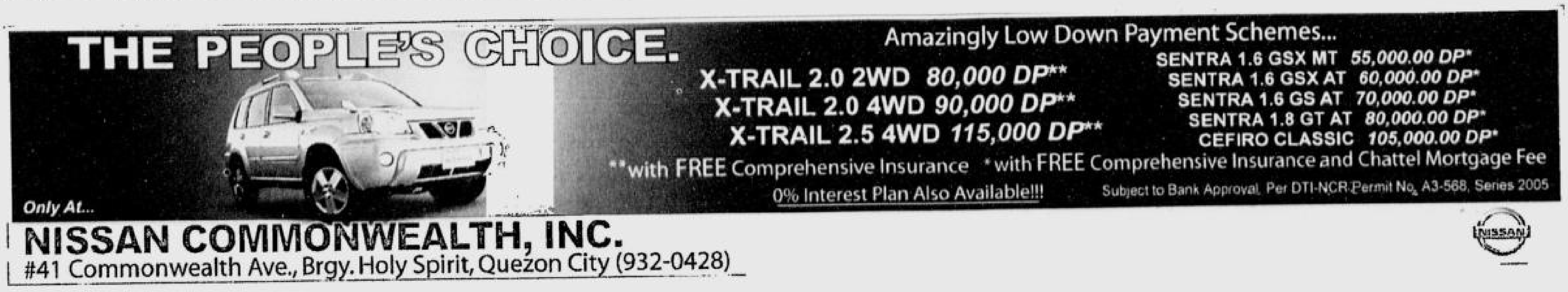
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Fueled conflict

CATCH MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

THE PETROL wars are on in earnest. Who hasn't seen or heard the fantastic fuel-efficiency claims made by two of the larger petroleum companies? Advertising has never been this aggressive in recent history, with Brands Pt and Sh claiming phenomenal frugality and unparalleled savings with their proprietary gasoline products. It's "tagline versus tagline" in this conflict, with the ultimate prize being the gasoline peso of the Philippine motoring masses.

In this game of "my gas goes farther than yours," we, the motoring consumers, must ask if there is any truth in the claims made by these multimillion-peso ad placements. Can we really go that far on so little gasoline? Are we at an age where ridiculously efficient engines can be had straight off the showroom floors?

Credit must be given to the meticulous care and planning that gave us the 30-kilometer plus test claims. Our careful consideration of the public facts will go a long way in giving us the answers but the ultimate truth lies in complete methodological disclosure from the claimants.

How does one go so far, over a thousand kilometers, on a single 40-liter tank of unleaded fuel? We must look at the possible manufactured methods behind these mileage miracles to get to any sort of exactness and certainty.

Stumbling blocks

The main principle that must be accepted is that there is no way, under "normal" Manila driving conditions, to achieve such a feat of frugality. Stop-and-go traffic is the first condition that must be overcome. There is not enough flow in our metropolitan congestion to get the ideal engine operating conditions to even come close to half the advertised claims.

Another stumbling block for the common motorist in duplicating the results of Messrs. Ramirez and Roces is the protagonists' unashamed, studied use momentum. Gravity, working on the mass of the driven vehicle is constant and inexhaustible.

The likely image of these drivers free-wheeling down a twisty mountain road in neutral, with little or no use of the brakes, is a testament to their skill and bravado. I ask the public not to try this themselves as it is a dangerous but essential method in achieving efficiency numbers north of 30-km per liter.

What then, if one was able to construct or manage a situation that eliminates all the factors that lead to fuel inefficiency? Could we then get somewhere near the same consumption of these fuel misers? The answer is a bold and confident yes.

An intrinsically efficient engine, like the L13A Dsi motor of the car that both companies used, is a logical basic building block of any "record-breaking" effort. Already thrifty in the hands of a fuel-efficiency klutz like myself, smaller wonders (like 12-km/liter in traffic) are achievable with a little more throttle discipline.

Logical choice

Running in the dead night would be a logical choice so as to avoid traffic jams and it would also make it humane enough to run without the air-conditioner. The car's windows could also be closed for maximum aerodynamic efficiency, further stretching the effective range of the vehicle.

The mileage per liter numbers truly begin to climb when the engine is made to approach optimum operating conditions, like during long-cruising stretches at a steady pace of about 80 kph. String enough of these stretches together, in ideal conditions, and 30 to 40 km to the liter does become reality.

We must implore the petroleum companies who continue to make these claims for more information about the methods they used and the conditions that were actually run. Without any sort of transparency, there will only be public doubt and skepticism.

More information

How were the results actually obtained? Did they use exact methods (like driving the car until it stopped from fuel starvation) or just mere extrapolation (calculating mileage divided by consumed fuel) to get their claims? Were their fuel tanks sealed and checked by an auditing party or authority? The conditions seem endless and the variables are many, but the way these were treated will give us a better idea of how they came about their numbers.

I am reluctant to ask these brands to go head to head in a public showdown that would once and for all answer the question of which fuel is better. Maybe that is what is needed.

If they are already at the point where their ads are subtly scripted to downplay or discredit each other, then a direct fuel-efficiency competition is the logical next step. If the gas giants agree on the same methodology, subject themselves to the same regulations, the same limitations and apply a common sense of integrity, then perhaps we can have a clearer picture of the truth behind the performance of these products.

Realistically, the consumers should not, by any stretch of the imagination, think that they are purchasing exactly the same fuel efficiency that is blatantly advertised. We are merely buying fuel with the potential to go so far on so little, nothing more. It is ultimately up to what we drive and the way we drive that will determine if there is any economic value to our choice of fuel.

Khaos commended for int'l patent application

KHAOS was recently granted by an international research authority the necessary commendations for an application of an international patent after they determined that there are no similar products that have been patented before it. The international research authority also considered the device to be novel to involve an inventive step (International Patent Application PCT/PH2005/000002).

Khaos conducted tests to determine for itself if fuel savings and reduction in emissions are fairly possible after application of the device. Tests were also done by local agencies such as Department of Energy and Department of Environment and Natural Resources as well as some international agencies like Saudi Arabia Testing and Ford Indonesia Testing. The results from these tests were then used by Khaos as basis for their claims.

The importance of this information will likely influence the consumers' ability to make sound judgments on which fuel-saving device to purchase. These tests will also reveal which ones are actually working and which ones are just claiming for fame.

A neutral agency like the DOE can then set the bar for such devices and disseminate to the public ample information for devices that claim to be very efficient in saving fuel and decreasing emissions. Therefore, Khaos is willing for its product to undergo such tests.

Filipino invention

Khaos started in 1973 when a jeepney operator started to deem on how he would be able to save gas in spite of the enforced fuel ratio and fuel price increase that time.

The situation paved way for him to ascertain a device which would give the ultimate solution to the world's ultimate problem—air pollution.

Pablo V. Planas, the man behind this great invention, was never discouraged to develop his device originally named as Super Gas Reducer. Fellow drivers tried the device and had to confirm that there really was great savings of 24 percent on their gas consumption.

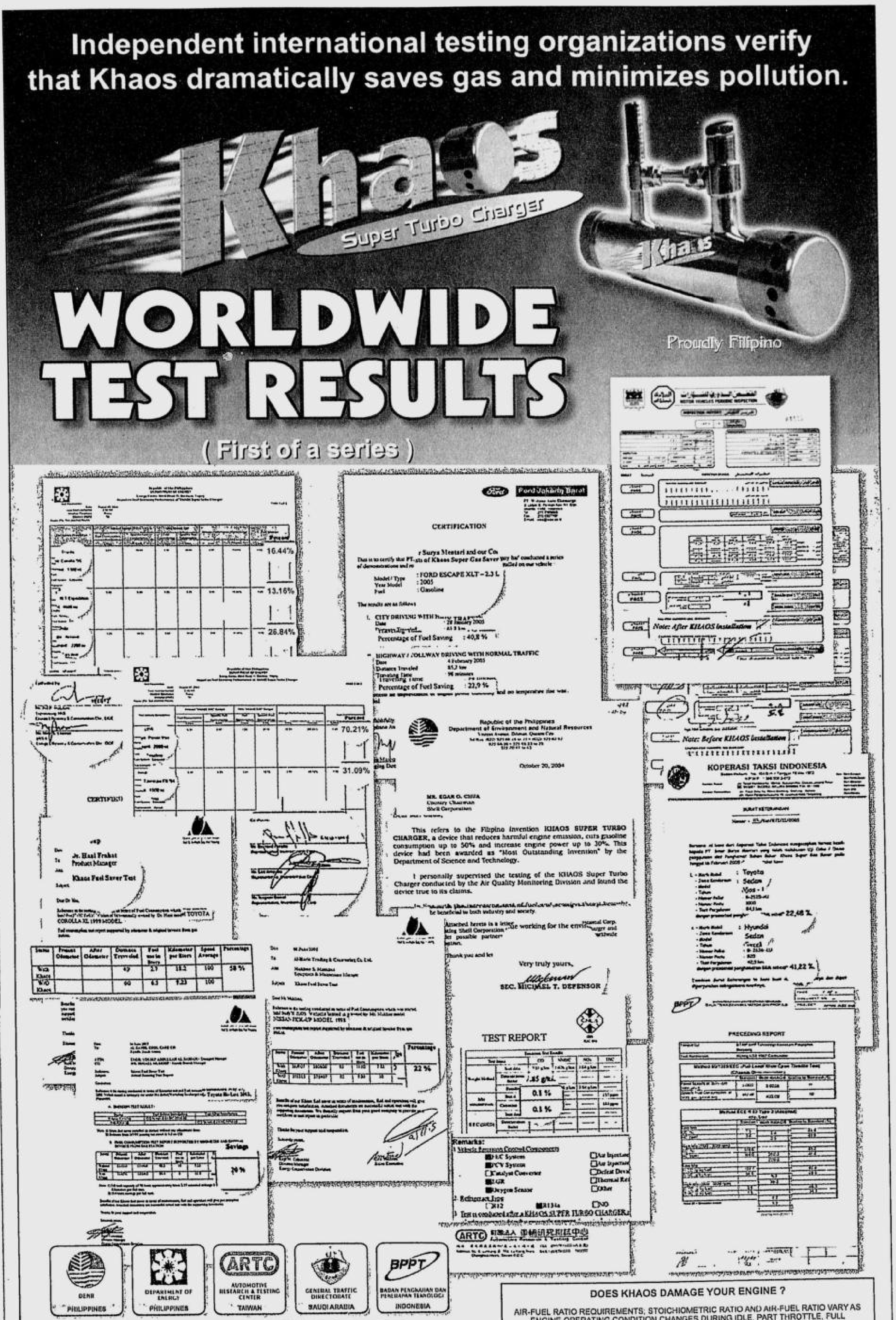
Results in 1976 technical tests conducted by various government agencies showed that out of 44 gadgets of various types, Planas' invention achieved the grand prize as gas-saving device.

The National Pollution Control Commission (NPCC) test results and evaluation reports and Automotive Research Testing Center (ARTC) of Taiwan showed that the device of Planas has proved its efficiency as antipollution device since it can bring carbon monoxide levels down to zero. Since then, he is continuously improving his invention.

Khaos Super Turbo Charger, formerly known as Super Gas Reducer, made its debut in the market in November last year with the help of co-owner Jerry Acuzar. It has already won the 2003 Presidential Award for the Most Outstanding Invention for Transportation and Environment.

Khaos Super Turbo Charger has been saving motorists hundreds and even thousands of cash in fuel and engine maintenance costs. It also prolongs the life span of your engine, spark plugs, mufflers and engine oil.

And for high-end cars like Audi, BMW, Chevrolet, Chrysler, Daihatsu, Dodge, Ford, Hyundai, Honda, Kia, Lexus, Mitsubishi, Mazda, Mercedes-Benz, Nissan, Opel, Range Rover, Suzuki, Subaru, Toyota, Volkswagen, Volvo and all other brands of gasoline-fed engine are capable for installation of KSTC.



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DOES KHAOS DAMAGE YOUR ENGINE ?

AIR-FUEL RATIO REQUIREMENTS; STOICHIOMETRIC RATIO AND AIR-FUEL RATIO VARY AS ENGINE OPERATING CONDITION CHANGES DURING IDLE, PART THROTTLE, FULL THROTTLE ACCELERATION AND START. THE IDEAL AIR-FUEL RATIO IS THE STOICHIOMETRIC RATIO 14 7lb air to 1lb gasoline KHAOS WILL REGULATE THE AIR ENTERING THE ENGINE DURING IDLING CLOSE TO THE IDEAL FUEL RATIO (14 7lb) TO PRODUCE THE IDEAL AIR-FUEL RATIO FOR EFFICIENT BURNING THEREFORE, IT HAS NO ADVERSE EFFECT ON INTERNAL ENGINE COMPONENTS BECAUSE THE DEVICE ONLY HELPS THE ENGINE ACHIEVE THE IDEAL AIR-FUEL RATIO AT IDLING CONDITION

HOW EFFECTIVE IS KHAOS ON ENGINE WITH HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED FUEL AND EMISSIONS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM ?

KHAOS HELPS THE SYSTEM BY SUPPLYING THE ENGINE WITH THE IDEAL AMOUNT OF AIR IN A TIMELY MANNER AT IDLING CONDITIONS THE DEVICE WILL THEN AUGMENT THE NECESSARY AIR NEEDED, DUE TO THE INEFFICIENCY OF THE SENSORS AND MOTORIZED VALVE CONTROLLERS TO COMPREHEND THE EXCESSIVE AND UNUSUAL VARIABLITY OF INCOMING STREAMS OF DATA WHICH, AT SOME POINT FEEDBACKS COULD NOT BE PROCESSED IMMEDIATELY BY THE MICROPROCESSOR THEREFORE, A SLIGHT DELAY IN REACTION TIME OCCURS. BUT, THESE DELAYS ARE STILL WITHIN THE MALFUNCTION THRESHOLDS THUS THE MALFUNCTION INDICATOR LIGHT WILL NOT ILLUMINATE

The Fortuner keeps a promise

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

IF SPORT utility vehicles could talk, I imagine that the Toyota Fortuner made a promise to me in Australia last March. This happened when, as one of about 50 Asean motoring journalists who joined the Toyota Great Multipurpose Vehicle Adventure, I got to test the mettle of the Fortuner on tough off-road terrain inside Darlington Park on the Gold Coast.

The Fortuner passed the off-road trials with flying colors, but I wondered how this member of Toyota's IMV (Innovative International Multipurpose Vehicle) series would do on smooth roads. Would the ride be bouncy like the 4x4 Hilux pickup or comfy and almost car-like? Somehow, I imagined the Fortuner promising me the latter.

Finding out

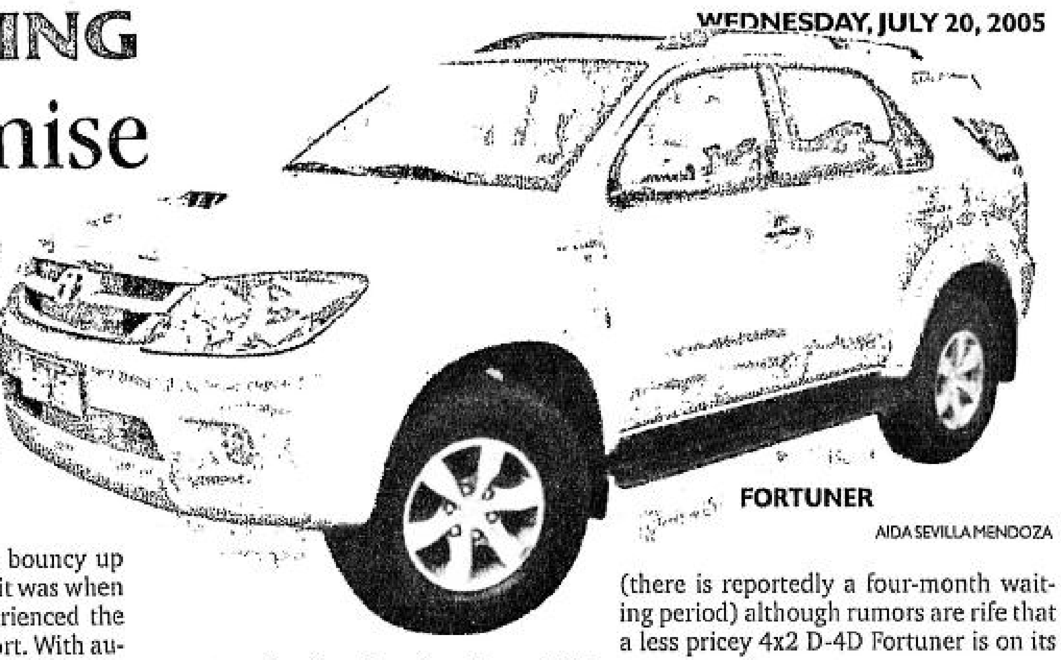
I finally found out whether the Fortuner would keep its promise when a 4x4 3.0-liter D-4D common rail turbo-intercooler diesel variant was loaned to me here in Manila for a week. Thinking that the Fortuner is really a 4x4 Hilux pickup underneath with an SUV body superimposed on it, I was initially pessimistic. The 4x4 Hilux, after all, is an IMV also and has the same strong, rigid Toyota Outstanding Platform (TOP) and the same powerful 163 ps D-4D engine as the 4x4 Fortuner.

But as I realized later, they have different rear suspension setups. While the Hilux's rear suspension is leaf spring, the Fortuner's is 4-link with coil spring and lateral control rod. On the other hand, the Fortuner and the Hilux are equipped with the same front suspension—double wishbone with coil springs and stabilizers—which may explain the similar bouncy ride up front.

Big difference

While the Fortuner is less bouncy up front compared to the Hilux, it was when I sat in the back that I experienced the big difference in riding comfort. With auto shop proprietor (and fellow fast driver) Martin Tancinco at the wheel of the Fortuner for about five minutes in Filinvest Alabang, it was as if I were ensconced in the rear seat of a large sedan. The ride was firm but not bucking horse-bouncy.

Ride quality is an important factor to most people when they shop for an SUV. More so since Toyota is marketing the P1,489,000 D-4D 4x4 Fortuner, which resembles the Lexus RX 330, as an urban seven-seater SUV to those who drive on the road more often than off-road—which, by the way, is the great majority. The line forms on the right (there is reportedly a four-month waiting period) although rumors are rife that a less pricey 4x2 D-4D Fortuner is on its way.



FORTUNER

AIDA SEVILLA MENDOZA

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Always forgive your enemies. Nothing annoys them more!

* * *

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.

HYUNDAI TUCSON tops J. D. Power and Associates Initial Quality Study

The 2005 Tucson, Hyundai's all-new compact SUV, has won praises from the prestigious global marketing information firm, J. D. Power and Associates, as the highest quality all-new model launched in the market in 2005.

Equipped with segment-leading features such as standard safety mechanism and well-configured interior design that provides ample room and seamless comfort for the driver, passengers and their cargo, Tucson has raised the bar higher for Hyundai which now ranks third from last year's fourth place in the non-luxury brand category of the J. D. Power Initial Quality Studies. In the US, Tucson was the first SUV to offer six standard airbags and Standard Electronic Stability Control, all for under $20,000.

Aside from its spacious interiors and forward-looking safety features, the 2005 Tucson is powered by a 2.0-liter CRDI (common-rail direct injection) diesel engine, the latest technological breakthrough that incredibly reduces fuel consumption while delivering a maximum power of 112ps @ 4000rpm, and maximum torque of 25kg-m @ 1,800~2,500rpm. Tucson has a powertrain of electronic full-time 4WD with H-Matic (automatic) transmission.

Last year, the 5th Generation Hyundai Sonata has also earned top honors in the 2004 J. D. Power and Associates Initial Quality Study, ranking highest in the Vehicle Dependability Study (VDS) for the entry midsize car class.

The 2005 Tucson is now available at Hyundai authorized dealers nationwide.

An inspired fusion of form and function

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Introducing TUCSON CRDi Diesel Engineering

Photo may vary from actual unit.

The CRDi Turbo Intercooler diesel engine consumes less fuel yet provides more power and torque at low speeds without noise and vibrations.

Utmost driver protection with Driver Side SRS Airbags.

Full fold-flat rear seats give you extra cargo space.

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- 4x4 performance with sedan-like fuel efficiency with the Electronic 4WD.
- Anti-lock Braking System ensures superior braking control even on slippery surfaces.

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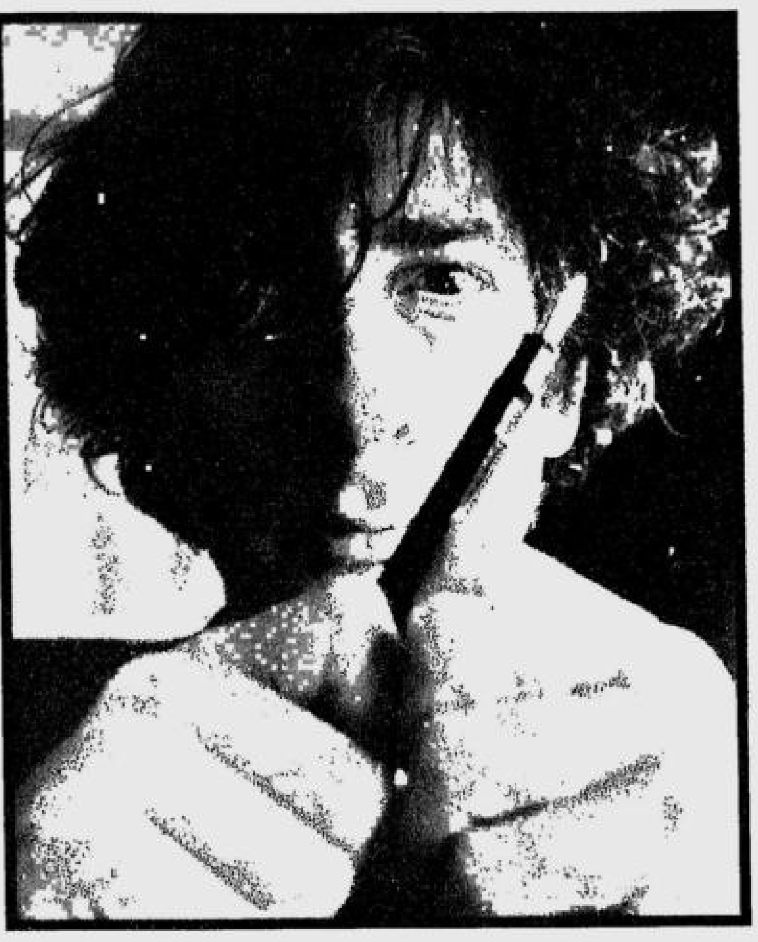
Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**
Chief of Correspondents **Pam Pastor**

More dreamtime with Neil Gaiman



The 'Sandman' creator chats with the INQUIRER about blogging, movies, writing, and what a long, strange trip it has been

Conclusion

By Ruel S. De Vera

IN THE WEEK leading up to Neil Gaiman's stay in the Philippines, Just a Philosopher's Stone's throw away from his hotel, anti-government protestors had gathered. He was checked into the Peninsula Manila under the name of Mr. Punch, a character from one of his own books. That Gaiman is now living a rather adventurous and surreal life not unlike that of one of his fictional people is to be expected. By telling the story of Dream, ruler of the Dreaming, and his dysfunctional family, the Endless in "The Sandman's" 75-issue run, Gaiman has seduced a world's imaginings and has let his creative wanderlust take him where it may, to novels, children's books and other creative endeavors.

Do you have an upcoming project with Marvel Comics?

(Smiles and answers very carefully) Yes.

Can you say something about it?

(Smiles wider and shakes his head vigorously) No.

"Coraline" was followed by "The Wolves in The Wall." Now, you're coming out with "Anansi Boys..."

Well, "Anansi Boys" is an adult novel—well, sort of. Actually, "Anansi Boys" is an odd novel. "American Gods," which won the Hugo and the Nebula and the Bram Stoker and the SFX, the Locus and so on and so forth, is definitely not a book for kids. I mean it has horror and extreme sex, and all sorts of cool stuff. "Anansi Boys" is the next adult novel, but it has no extreme sex, no sex, no swearing, there's absolutely nothing in there that I wouldn't mind a 12-year-old reading.

On the other hand, "The Graveyard Book," which is the next children's book, begins at least in the current draft, with four pages of a serial killer walking around a house in the dark, having killed all of the family, and looking for the baby to finish them all off. It's the scariest, nastiest thing I've ever written. These days, I don't make a lot of separation between the adult stuff and the kid's stuff as I should.

Along those lines, you've done quite a bit of film work, with the English script for Hayao Miyazaki's "Princess Mononoke," the script for "Good Omens," and now "MirrorMask." Following your gustatory metaphor, is cinema another kind of meal that you really enjoy?

Absolutely. The fun for me of cinema is that it's a completely different kind of adventure. And there's also this huge kind of teamwork involved.

The strange thing about cinema and TV is this. When you read a novel by me, it's a book by me. That's what you get. When you read a comic by me, it's a comic by me and an artist. When you're looking at film, you're looking at something I thought up, as interpreted by a director, as told to you by 80 people and the limitations of budget. It's so much of a different thing.

On the other hand, I love the reach of film. I love how many people see them. I love, right now, the weird technical possibilities of film and that "special effects" no longer mean what they did. And that is really interesting. The things that Dave McKean experimented on in "MirrorMask" will wind up proving useful somewhere down the line.

You've always been interested in different kinds of mythology and different ways of thinking. Is there anything new that you're currently fascinated by or enjoying? What books are you reading?

Right now, I'm sort of just loading the hopper. Right now, I'm just finding out about it. The joy of being an author for me is that the place where you get ideas or background material is never other people's books, it's always weird little books about unlikely things. I just finished reading a book on the history on the menagerie of the Tower of London, going back to the 13th century. I'm now reading a book about the legends of the 10 lost tribes of Israel, and that's really interesting, how virtually every ethnic group in the world has been identified as part of the lost tribes of Israel.

That's why you've become both an icon of reading and writing in the world. How does that feel?

If I ever thought about it, it would be a bit alarming. It's like the blog (you can find, along with other fascinating resources on his website, http://www.neilgaiman.com). I've been keeping the blog since January 2001, which is about as far back as people have been blogging. There were dinosaurs blogging when I started. "Dear blog, met a stegosaurus today." Overall, there's probably a million words' worth of stuff in the blog and you could probably extract a small book of advice for writers from this stuff I've written to answer specific questions.

But I never set out to keep the blog as a source of advice for writers. It's just that lots of people want to know things like, how do you this and how do you deal with writer's block and whatever. And this is how I do it, this is what I think it is.

Is it still as much fun for you or has it gotten more difficult as time has gone on, now that your reach is so wide and there's a huge audience for your stuff?

I think it's just different. I'm not sure that harder is right, and I'm not sure that more fun is right. It gets harder to arrange time because all of the sudden you become like a bowling ball on a rubber sheet. When you're a young writer, you say yes to everything. And then there's a point when you turn around and... you have to start saying no, which is very hard for a freelance writer to learn.

I still enjoy writing. The most fun I've had the last year was going to Glasgow and hearing them workshop "The Wolves In The Walls" as a children's opera by the National Theater of Scotland. And it was absolutely funny and wonderful. The second most fun was writing "Anansi Boys," and that just the process of me and my pen going off every day and writing. I think that includes the terrible days, of "Christ, I'm an idiot, what makes me think I could be a writer," and the days when I didn't even bother picking up my pen because I'm completely struck in a story and had no idea what was going to happen next.

I was three-quarters of the way through "Anansi Boys" when I called up my agent and said, "I have to tell you, the book is crap. I think I'm going to go and stop writing now. We're just going to have to tell Harpers that we're never going to finish the book." And she says, "Oh, so you're at that point in the book." And I say, "What do you mean?" And she answers, "You always get there. All my writers do." Three-quarters of the way, that's how you feel about it. And then suddenly it all pulls itself together.

I'm so happy with the book, it's so funny and so light. I like the

MORE/ D3

GAIMAN gamely chatted with and signed for his fans on his first trip to the Philippines.

PHOTOS: RAFFY LERMA

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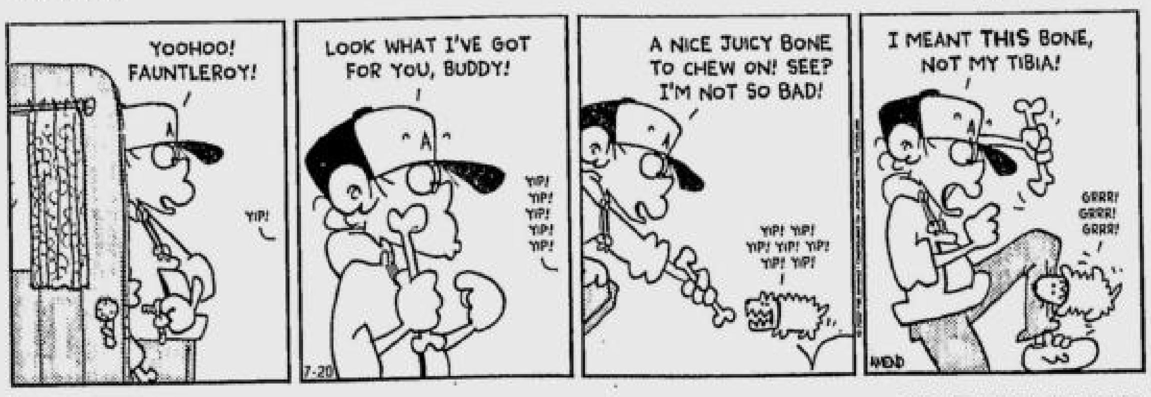
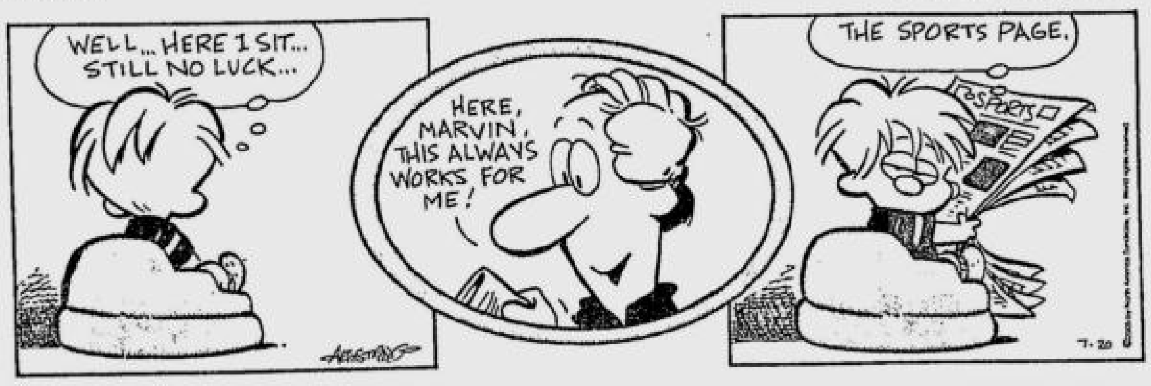
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


YOOHOO! FAUNTLEROY!
YIP!
LOOK WHAT I'VE GOT FOR YOU, BUDDY!
YIP! YIP! YIP! YIP! YIP!
A NICE JUICY BONE TO CHEW ON! SEE? I'M NOT SO BAD!
YIP! YIP! YIP! YIP! YIP! YIP! YIP!
I MEANT THIS BONE, NOT MY TIBIA!
GRRR! GRRR! GRRR!
7-20
AMEND

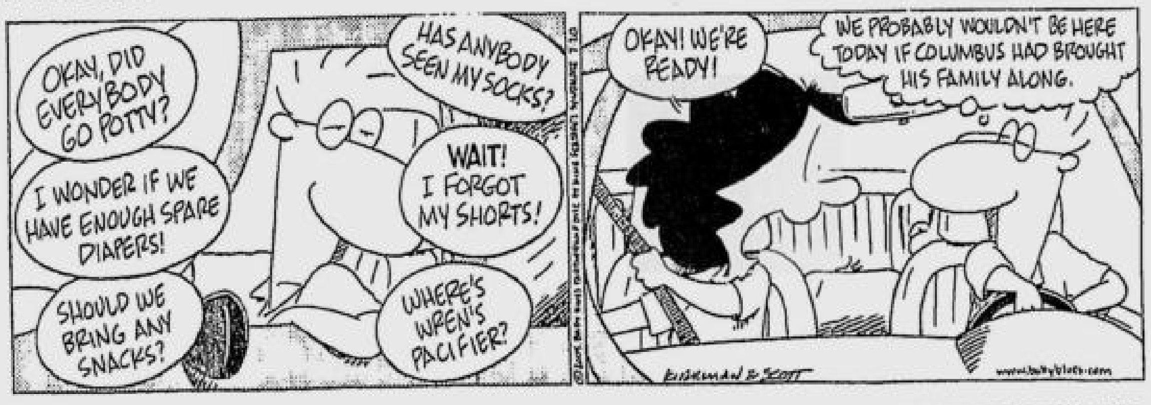
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


WELL... HERE I SIT... STILL NO LUCK...
HERE, MARVIN, THIS ALWAYS WORKS FOR ME!
THE SPORTS PAGE.
SPORTS
ARMSTRONG
7-20

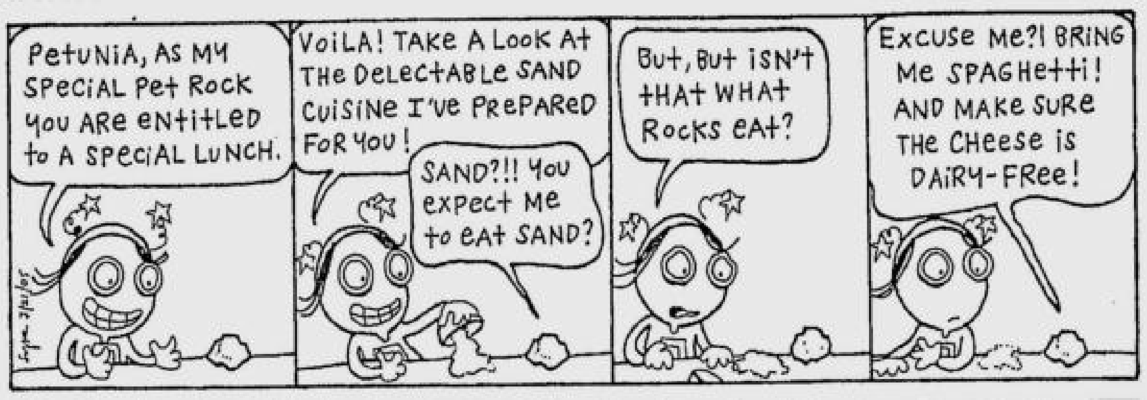
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


OKAY, DID EVERYBODY GO POTTY?
I WONDER IF WE HAVE ENOUGH SPARE DIAPERS!
SHOULD WE BRING ANY SNACKS?
HAS ANYBODY SEEN MY SOCKS?
WAIT! I FORGOT MY SHORTS!
WHERE'S WREN'S PACIFIER?
OKAY! WE'RE READY!
WE PROBABLY WOULDN'T BE HERE TODAY IF COLUMBUS HAD BROUGHT HIS FAMILY ALONG.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT
www.babyblues.com

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


PetuNiA, AS MY SPeCiAL Pet Rock you ARe eNtitLeD to A SPeCiAL LuNCH.
VoiLA! TAKe A Look At The DeLectABLe SAND CuiSiNe I've PRePAReD FoR You!
SAND?!! You expect Me to eAt SAND?
But, But iSN't tHAt WHAt Rocks eAt?
Excuse Me?! BRiNG Me SPAGHetti! AND MAKe SuRe The CHeese is DAiRY-FRee!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Despite your inner sensitivity, you have an aloof, elegant mask to present to the world. Although fearless and courageous, you're sensitive and sentimental. Most of you can deal well with the public. Your humanitarian nature makes you helpful to others. Expect increased solitude this year in order to learn something important.Birthdate of: Carlos Santana, musician; Diana Rigg, actress; Natalie Wood, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Avoid arguments with authority figures, parents, teachers and police today. Pushing your agenda is not a good idea. Just sit back and watch.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Issues related to publishing, medicine, the law and education are a bit sticky today. If you can avoid these areas, do so.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You might not agree with others about how to share something. Look deeply into your own motivation. If your objective is positive and helpful to all concerned, that's all that matters.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): People are highly opinionated today! Therefore, lie low and just watch the words fly.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your desire to take charge of something at work could get out of hand. You might find yourself in hot water, which is all right if you're a tea bag.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You think your bright, creative ideas can earn money. And perhaps they can. Nevertheless, don't count your chickens before they're barbecued.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Try to be open-minded and cooperative today. Your impulse is to dig in your heels about something at home. But what will this achieve? Remember: You need harmony around you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): For some reason, you're prepared to push your agenda today. Perhaps this is not wise. Try to see what others want before you decide what they need.

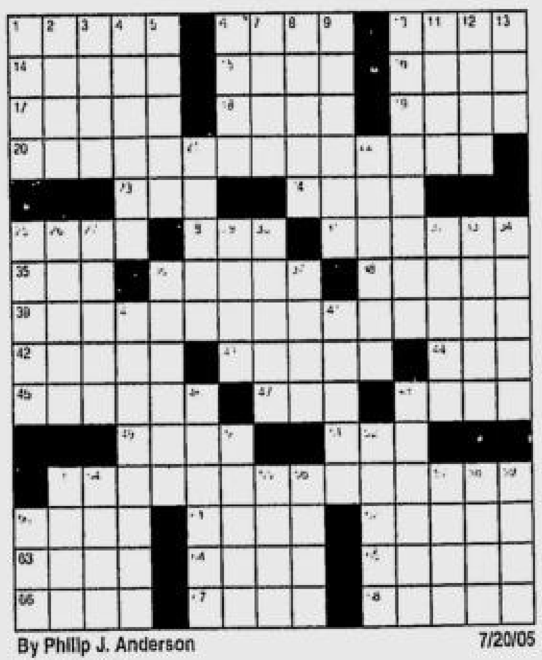
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You have big moneymaking ideas today. (Good. You might pull them off.) On the other hand, don't overextend yourself. Don't spend too much money.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You're entrenched in your views today. Because of this, you will take on anyone at home or at work. But is this wise? Try to keep the peace at home, especially.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You have a scientific mind, and you love to debate. Today you want to enlighten others about philosophical, political or religious concepts.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You might lend a friend too much money today. Or you might spend too much money with a friend today. Either way, be more prudent and cautious with financial matters.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

7/20/05

ACROSS
1 Customary practice
6 Crop of a bird
10 Model Macpherson
14 1836 siege site
15 Round dance
16 Have to have
17 "Goodbye, Mr. Chips" star
18 Way of old Rome
19 Low marks
20 Place to make a deal
23 Language suffix
24 Evening in Milano
25 Buddies
28 CSA soldier
31 Wreak havoc upon
35 Lyrical poem
36 Hollow tubes
38 Book of fiction
39 Place to make a deal
42 Turner and Holmes
43 City on the Nile
44 Altar vow
45 Music system
47 Hot tub
48 Middle of March
49 Etc.'s cousin
51 Novelist Amy
53 Place to make a deal
60 Sitarist Shankar
61 Singer Brickell
62 Take a load off
63 Joie de vivre
64 Nerve network
65 Designer Clark
66 Comic Carvey
67 Cookie or piece of cake
68 Getz and Kenton

DOWN
1 Muslim pilgrimage
2 Moises of baseball
3 Musical group
4 Mental pictures
5 Schleps
6 "Blondie" creator Young
7 Type of IRA
8 Vicinities
9 Heated tray
10 Undertaking
11 Salacious stare
12 Peggy and Pinky
13 Wynn and Begley
21 Flourish on a letter
22 "A Streetcar Named Desire" star
25 Military installations
26 Allow in
27 Sierra __
29 Heroic saga
30 Lugosi and Bartok
32 Steer clear of
33 Crystal-lined rock
34 Roper and Lincoln
36 Old Madrid money
37 Lose footing
40 "Anna __"
41 Creative Muse
46 Horse operas
48 Overrun
50 Wool cloth
52 Bushy hairdos
53 Casa part
54 Bayh or Hunter
55 Comic Rudner
56 Ooze
57 Ingrid in "Casablanca"
58 Son of Adam
59 Former wives
60 Primary color

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

S	A	H	I	B	■	A	S	T	I	■	P	H	A	T
A	L	O	N	E	■	S	T	A	N	■	R	A	T	A
R	A	P	S	E	S	S	I	O	N	■	E	L	A	L
A	S	S	T	■	O	E	R	■	■	I	N	T	R	O
■	■	C	O	U	N	T	R	Y	C	O	U	S	I	N
S	T	O	R	K	■	S	E	A	L	U	P	■	■	■
E	S	T	E	E	M	■	D	W	I	■	S	E	R	B
R	O	C	■	S	A	L	■	N	O	N	■	C	I	A
A	S	H	E	■	R	A	E	■	S	A	L	O	O	N
■	■	■	M	E	R	I	T	S	■	T	E	S	T	S
P	O	P	P	S	Y	C	H	O	L	O	G	Y	■	■
O	B	O	E	S	■	■	I	C	E	■	A	S	T	A
K	E	I	R	■	R	O	C	K	B	O	T	T	O	M
E	S	S	O	■	I	R	A	E	■	D	E	E	R	E
S	E	E	R	■	P	E	L	T	■	D	E	M	O	N

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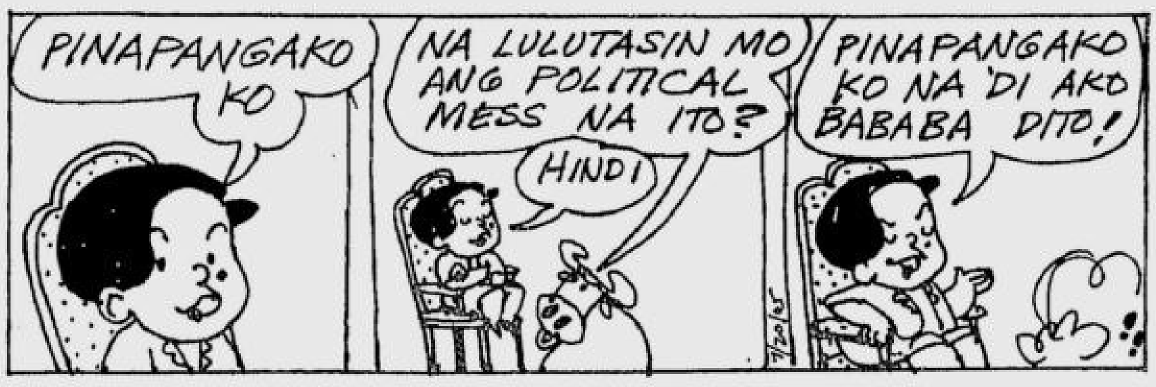
7/20/05

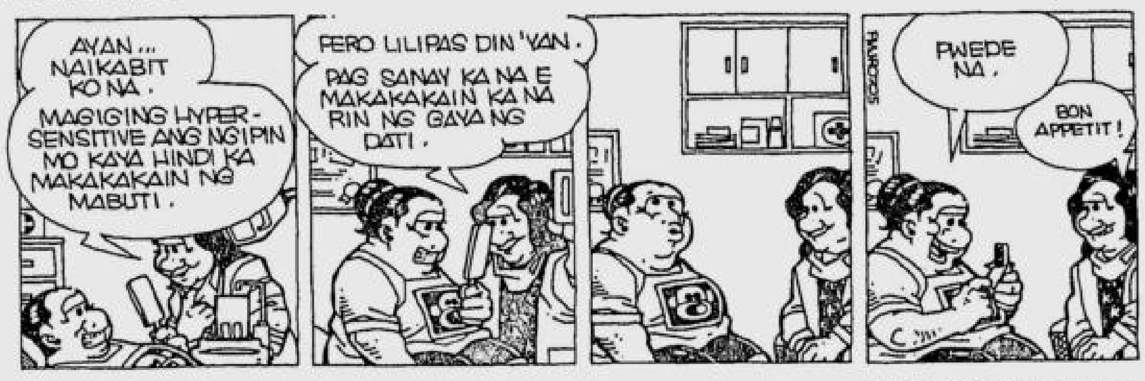
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


PINAPANGAKO KO
NA LULUTASIN MO ANG POLITICAL MESS NA ITO?
HINDI
PINAPANGAKO KO NA 'DI AKO BABABA DITO!
7/20/05

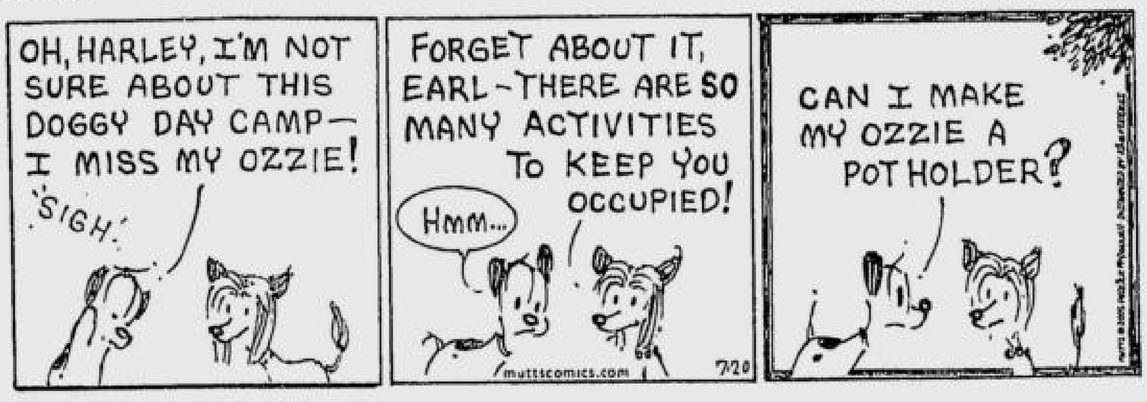
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


AYAN... NAIKABIT KO NA.
MAGIGING HYPER-SENSITIVE ANG NGIPIN MO KAYA HINDI KA MAKAKAKAIN NG MABUTI.
PERO LILIPAS DIN 'YAN.
PAG SANAY KA NA E MAKAKAKAIN KA NA RIN NG GAYA NG DATI.
PWEDE NA.
BON APPETIT!

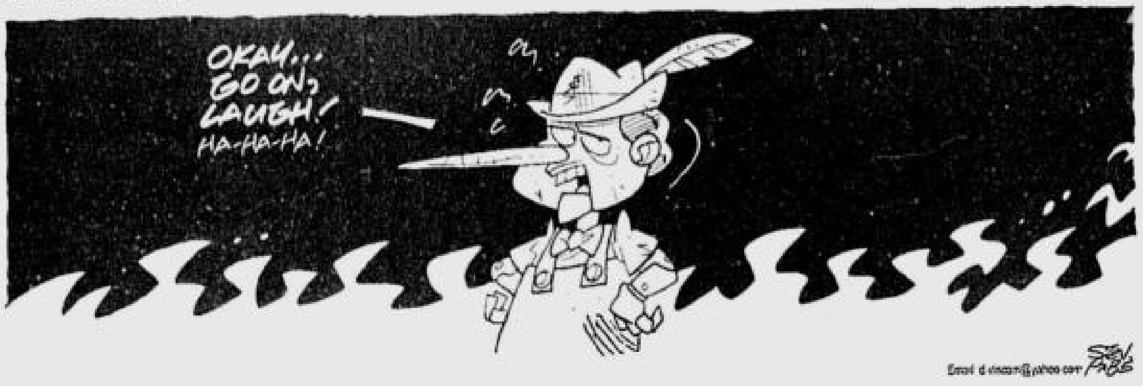
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


OH, HARLEY, I'M NOT SURE ABOUT THIS DOGGY DAY CAMP— I MISS MY OZZIE!
SIGH
FORGET ABOUT IT, EARL—THERE ARE SO MANY ACTIVITIES TO KEEP YOU OCCUPIED!
Hmm...
muttscomics.com
7/20
CAN I MAKE MY OZZIE A POT HOLDER?

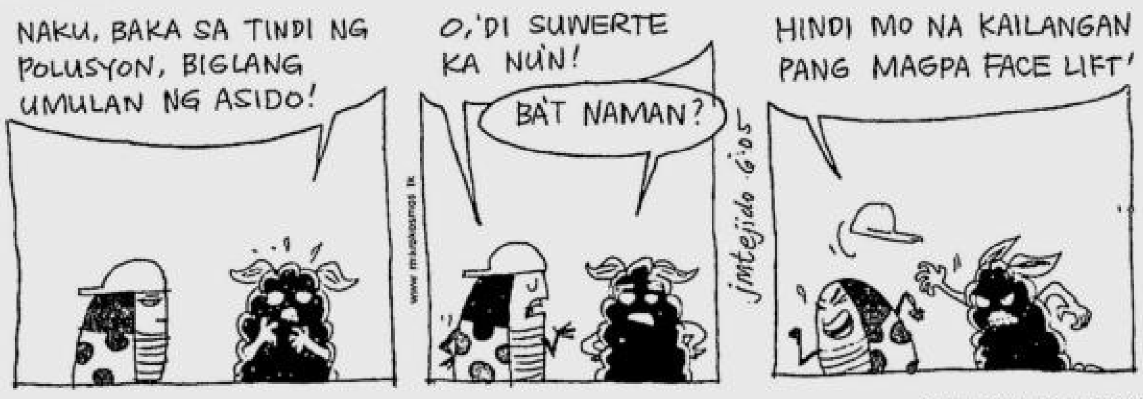
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


OKAY... GO ON, LAUGH! HA-HA-HA!
Email d vinzon@yahoo.com

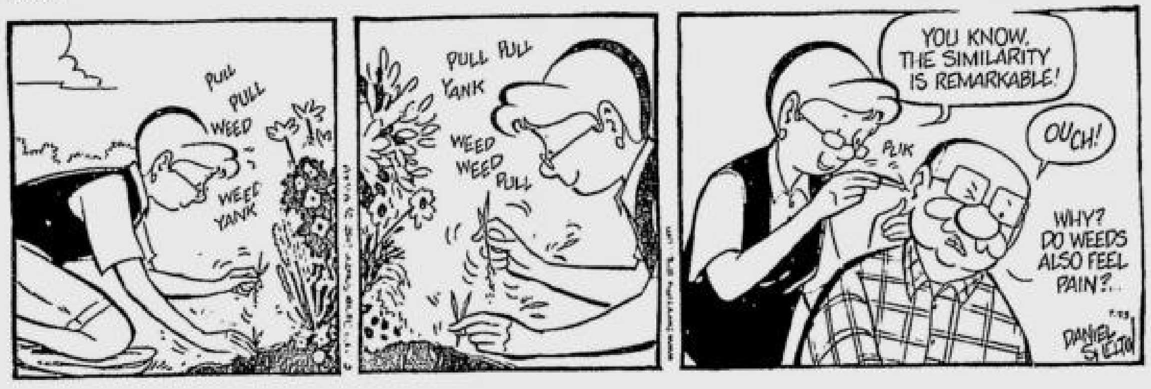
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


NAKU, BAKA SA TINDI NG POLUSYON, BIGLANG UMULAN NG ASIDO!
O, 'DI SUWERTE KA NUN!
BAT NAMAN?
jmtejido 6'05
HINDI MO NA KAILANGAN PANG MAGPA FACE LIFT'

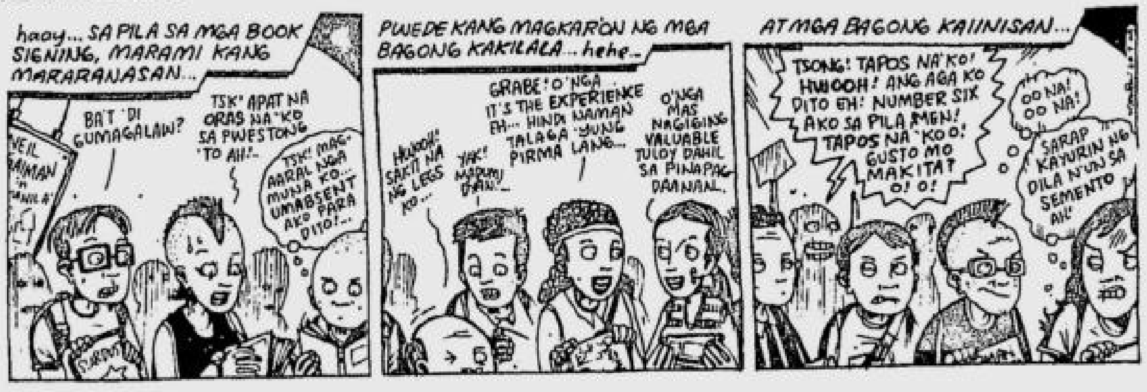
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


PULL PULL WEED WEED YANK
PULL PULL YANK WEED WEED PULL
YOU KNOW, THE SIMILARITY IS REMARKABLE!
PLIK
OUCH!
WHY? DO WEEDS ALSO FEEL PAIN?..
DANIEL SHELTON

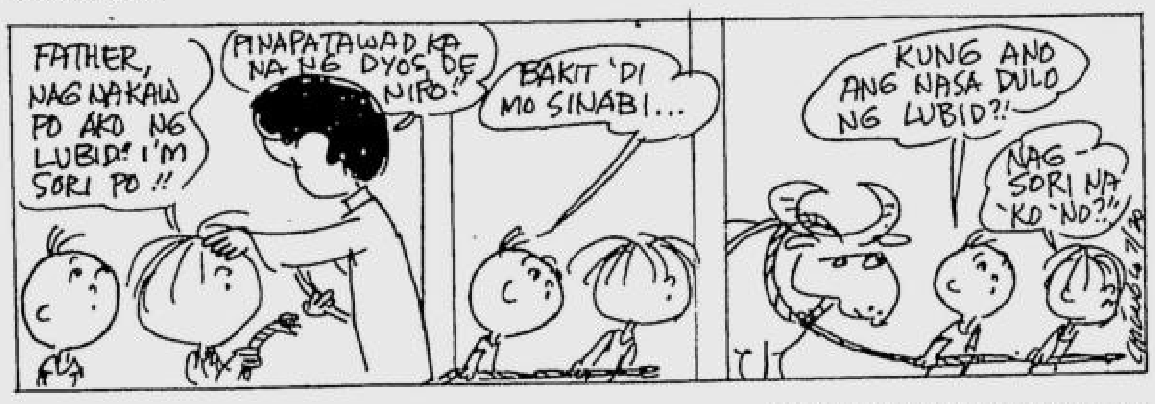
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


haay... SA PILA SA MGA BOOK SIGNING, MARAMI KANG MARARANASAN...
BAT 'DI GUMAGALAW?
TSK' APAT NA ORAS NA 'KO SA PWESTONG 'TO AH!
TSK! MAG-AARAL NGA MUNA KO... UMABSENT AKO PARA DITO!..
NEIL GAIMAN
PWEDE KANG MAGKARON NG MGA BAGONG KAKILALA... hehe..
HUUOH! SAKIT NA NG LEGS KO...
YAK! MARUMI DAW...
GRABE! O'NGA IT'S THE EXPERIENCE EH... HINDI NAMAN TALAGA 'YUNG PIRMA LANG...
O'NGA MAS NAGIGING VALUABLE TULOY DAHIL SA PINAPAG-DAANAN.
AT MGA BAGONG KAIINISAN...
TSONG! TAPOS NA 'KO! HUUOOH! ANG AGA KO DITO EH! NUMBER SIX AKO SA PILA MEN! TAPOS NA 'KOO! GUSTO MO MAKITA? O! O!
OO NA! OO NA!
SARAP KAYURIN NG DILA N'UN SA SEMENTO AH!

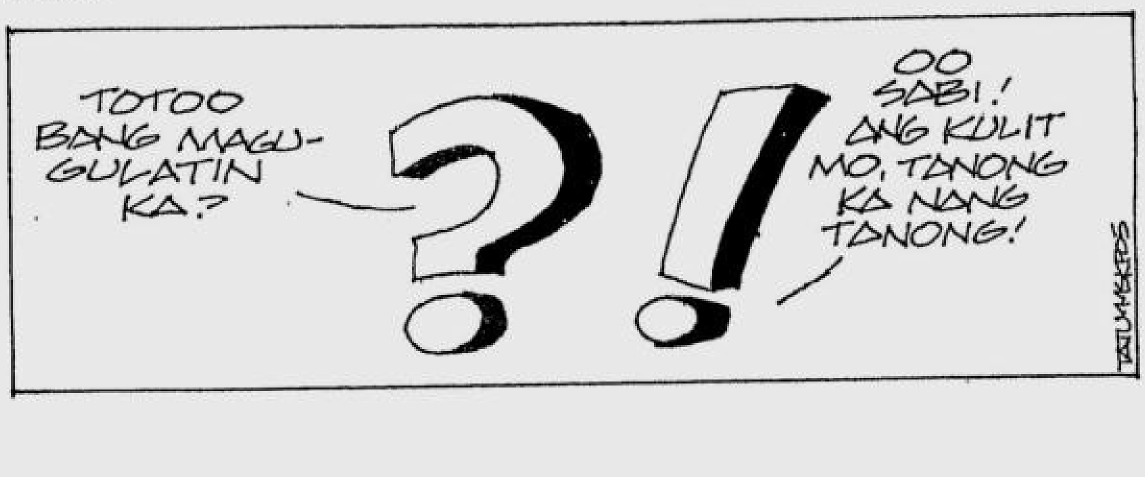
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


FATHER, NAGNAKAW PO AKO NG LUBID! I'M SORI PO!!
PINAPATAWAD KA NA NG DYOS DE NIRO!
BAKIT 'DI MO SINABI...
KUNG ANO ANG NASA DULO NG LUBID?!
NAG-SORI NA 'KO 'NO?!
CHIONGLO 7/20

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


TOTOO BANG MAGUGULATIN KA?
OO SABI! ANG KULIT MO, TANONG KA NANG TANONG!
TATUMBIRDS

Beauty is in the eyes

Vanity Fare

Lora
Gahol

SURE, they take up even less than a third of your face, but your eyes definitely say a lot about your beauty habits.

Those ojos are more than just the windows to your soul; they also give the world a glimpse of your life by reflecting stress, fatigue, and aging in ways the rest of your face can't. Those tiny lines, discoloration and eye bags should clue you in on how your eye area requires plenty of care and pampering—and on how you should pick only the best products to touch this delicate area.

Bad habits

Our skin sins and bad beauty habits wreak havoc on our eye area in many ways: dark circles, eye bags, fine lines, crow's feet. The good news is, we need not wait until we're in our 30s to start using products specifically targeted to these eye concerns.

. Don't get intimidated by the many "anti-aging" concoctions available on the counters. More often than not, they still do our young skin good. Besides, the eye area does age faster than the rest of our faces.

Fine lines, eye bags

If you're a little less kind to your skin and have been rubbing and tugging at your eyes faster than your conscience can tell you to stop, chances are, you have more creases up there than you'd like to have.

Clinique Daily Eye Benefits fills in those lines and helps smoothen the appearance of early aging signs. Apply a small amount using your ring finger and simply pat on until fully absorbed. Never rub on eye products!

For bags that sag and weigh down your entire look, try Origins A Perfect World for Eyes, a light serum that "works out" your skin with the help of antioxidant white tea, firming and toning the area.

Dark circles, puffiness

Dark circles under the eyes can make anyone look tired and fatigued—definitely un-pretty. More than just lack of sleep can cause such a condition, as more and more research say that this discoloration could be the accumulation of toxins and broken capillaries under the eyes.

In this case, a potent Vitamin K product is required to "drain" this discoloration, restore original skin quality, and result in a brighter eye area. I found one in Cernor K, an eye cream exclusively sold in dermatologists' offices and through Jeunesse Manila (e-mail jeunessemanila@yahoo.com or call 6888062 for orders). Rumored to be the secret of many stars, Cernor has both Vitamin K and retinol that work in tandem to boost cell regeneration.

Puffiness caused by water retention (or a night fighting with your beau) is easily remedied with L'Oreal Hydrafresh Eye, a cooling gel-cream that zaps the puff in an instant. Pop it in the fridge before application for a great waker-upper!

Makeup users

Use a pre-makeup eye gel for a smoother base and to protect the eye area from physical damage. I like MAC Fast Response Eye Cream, a quick-absorbing moisturizer than helps concealer and eye color go on smoother, and helps prevent caking in the middle of the day.

And just as you should care for your eyes before putting on makeup, you should make sure you give it the TLC it deserves when taking it off. Use a dual-phase (a water-oil mixture) makeup remover like Shiseido The Skincare Instant Eye and Lip Makeup Remover, which takes off eye makeup down to the last smudge of mascara.

Eye love

Concealing those imperfections in the meantime is a breeze with my all-time favorite Shu Uemura Eye Correcting Pro Concealer. It has turned into a must-have of phenomenal proportions (I cried when I lost mine!) probably because, with it, you can never go wrong.

Every kind of undereye discoloration is no match for the four genius shades that cover up the problem no matter what your skin tone. My stubborn brownish circles go on camouflage with the orange shade, and it stays that way even through a night of sweating it out on the dance floor.

Makeup-phobes who want to look "made-up" anyway can make do with eyeliner and mascara. I would use dark brown for a subtle day look and switch to a black one for evening. I love Bobbi Brown Creamy Eye Pencil that comes with a sponge-tipped end for easy smudging.

For mascara, I'd use Shiseido The Makeup Natural Combing Mascara for lush lashes that look really natural for day, and either Clinique Lash Power Mascara or Maybelline XXL Mascara for a big night out with the girls.

L'Oreal and Maybelline are located at PCX and other health and beauty stores; Shiseido at Rustan's and My Beauty Hub at 6750 Ayala Avenue, Makati; Bobbi Brown, Shu Uemura, Clinique, Origins and MAC at Rustan's Tower and Rustan's Makati; Cernor K from Jeunesse Manila, e-mail jeunessemanila@ yahoo.com or call 6888062 for orders.

E-mail the author at lora_gahol@ yahoo.com or lgahol@pldtvibe.net.

More dreamtime

From page D1

fact that people read the book and it makes them happier and makes them feel better, and that's what it was supposed to do.

You've ventured into all kinds of genres, but is there something specific you still really want to do?

I'd like to write a stage play. I've never created an original stage play. I've had stage plays adapted from things I've written and I've watched them and I've liked them, or I haven't. I would love to do something for the stage, to see what happens.

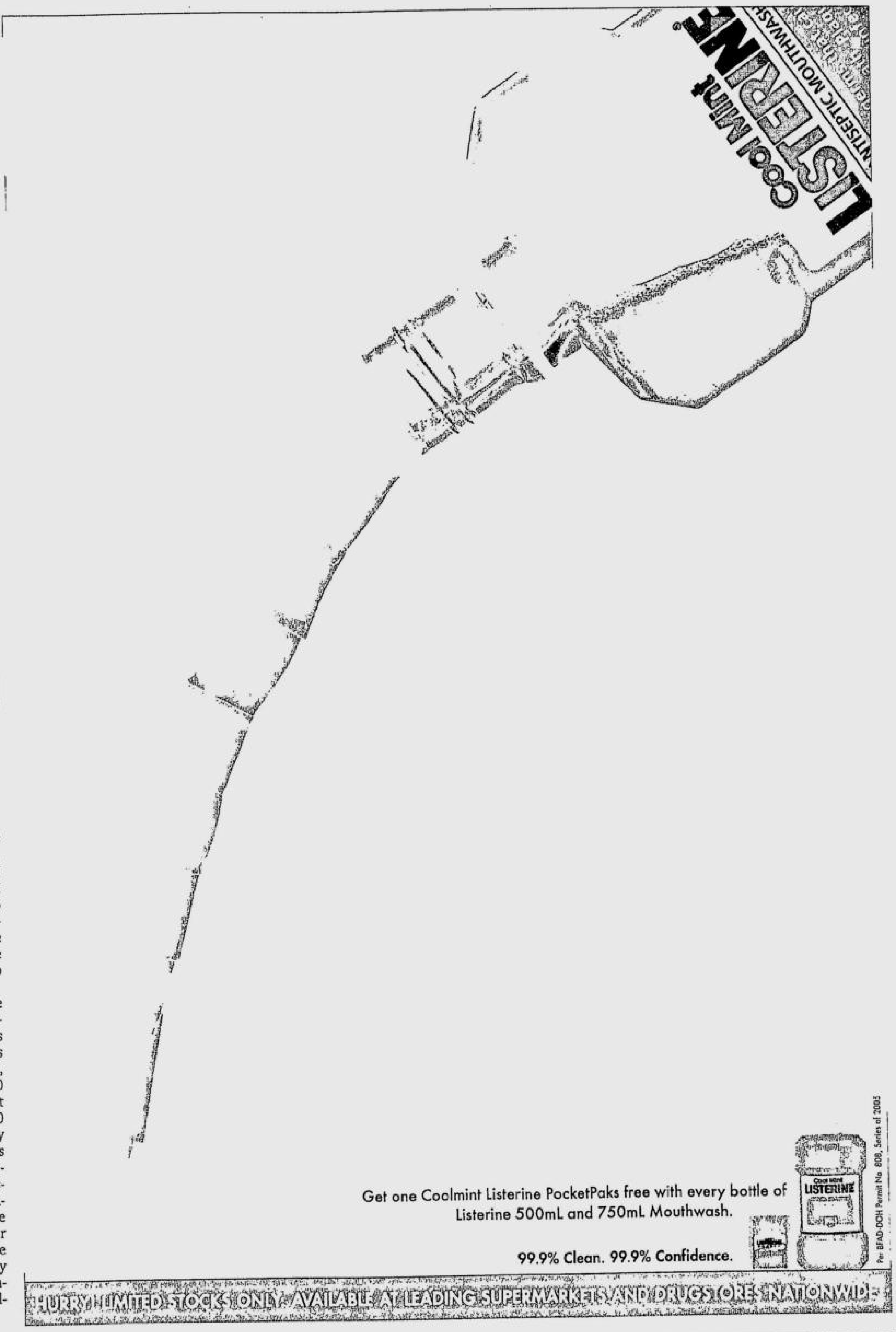
Does it surprise you that you're popular, say, in this country, or when you see the reactions you get when you travel?

No. The thing is, I have a more like a "kind-of" famousness. There's the normal kind of famousness that people have, which means people have heard of you even if they don't like your stuff or don't listen to you. Everyone in the world knows that Britney Spears is famous. I'm pretty sure she's the girl who sang "Oops, I Did It Again." But apart from that, I can't identify a Britney Spears song at gunpoint, and, honestly, give me a machinegun and line up 30 average-looking blond American girls and tell me to shoot Britney Spears and I can hit anybody.

But I have a sort of binary fame. Because I tend to exist in either "Neil-Gaiman-I-haven't-heard-of-him-what-does-he-do," or "Neil-Gaiman,-oh-my-God-he's-my-favorite-author." There's not an awful lot between them. What was becoming very apparent to me, because I get to go backstage at my website and I get to see where people are coming from—I noticed that Singapore, with a population of four million people was coming in at number five or number six, and the Philippines was coming in at number eight or nine, out of the world. That was the point when I said I have to go to the Philippines, I have to go to Singapore, I have to go and sign in these places because I know there are people there reading this stuff and I've never been there and I want to find out what they like.

I went this morning to judge the art show and it wasn't choosing between apples and oranges but like apples and chocolates and mirrors. So, I go down there, it's 9:30 a.m. and there are 350 people there, and they catch sight of me. One moment, I have 100 people shouting hello and I say hi, and then it just sort of erupts into a deafening, top-of-the-throat (begins to produce his estimation of a crowd shouting) ahhhhhhhh. It didn't feel like The Beatles. It felt much, much odder than that. I thought, "This is the Philippines, they are loud, they are vocal and they are really enthusiastic. This is going to be really fun."

"I STILL enjoy writing. The most fun I've had the last year was going to Glasgow and hearing them workshop "The Wolves In The Walls" as a children's opera..."



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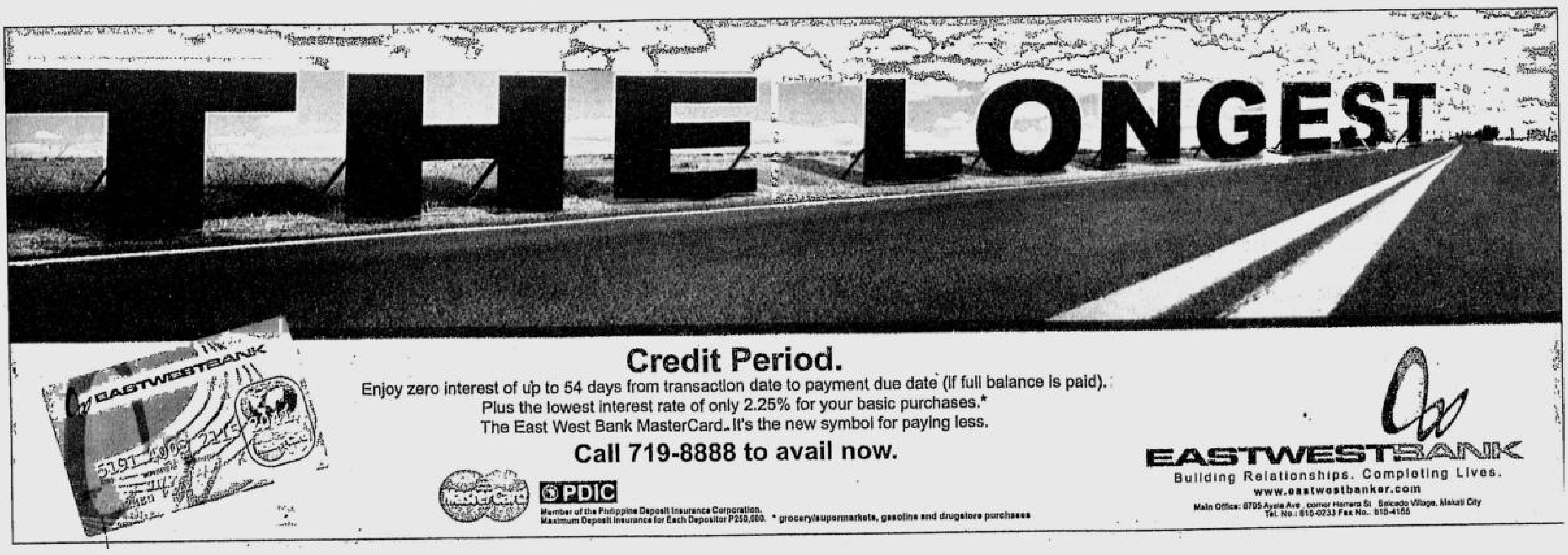

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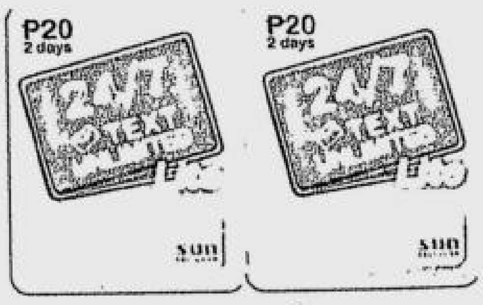

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SISTERS Tanya (left) and Aina Cruz of the Green Team tell the judges about their many shopping adventures together.

BLUE team's JR Arteficio and Rico Lopez explain the ideas behind their purchases.

RED team's Karen Torres demonstrates the many uses of her P150 beads.

READY, get set, shop!

Showdown of the shopaholics

Five teams, P2,000 each, countless stores in Eastwood City—which Filipino shoppers will get to represent the country in the Hong Kong Shopper of the Year 2005 International Competition?

By Pam Pastor
Photos by Pam Pastor and Rodel Rotoni

SHOPPING is a skill.

And if you're not convinced, the five finalists of 2bU!, Perceptions Inc. and Hong Kong Tourism Board's search for the Philippine representative to this year's Shopper of the Year contest in Hong Kong will surely sway your opinion.

For weeks, we asked readers to send in essays and photos proving that they are really experts in the shopping arena.

They did not disappoint.

Entries streamed in from all over the Philippines with people telling us about their shopping ammo. Quick eyes, great taste, tireless feet, the ability to haggle in different languages—the list is endless.

All the aspirants were impressive, but five stood out: Karen T. Torres from Angeles, Pampanga, Maria Ceylnna V. Gimenez from Las Piñas City, Benjamin Arteficio from Makati City, Catherine Avenido from Pasig City and Aina Cruz from Parañaque City.

Great finds

They, along with their chosen partners, met face to face one Friday in a final shopping showdown, to find out who gets to fly to Hong Kong to battle it out with other super shoppers from all over the world.

The venue was Eastwood City, a shopping haven rich in great finds for good prices.

The five teams first met at Gweilos, a rocking nightspot and home of the best *kesong puti* and *tuyo* pizza, for the briefing and the contest mechanics.

Each team was given P2,000 shopping money and an hour and a half to purchase items falling under three categories—fashion and beauty, jewelry and accessories, and home accessories.

Soon, five pairs of contestants were running around Eastwood City with their Hong Kong Live It Love It bags in tow, searching for the best finds.

When the time was up, the contestants faced a panel of three judges—Perception Inc.'s executive vice president Noel Nieva, Eastwood City's marketing officer Criselle Icasiano and this writer. They presented their purchases and fielded questions about Hong

SHOWDOWN/E3

JR ARTEFICIO and Rico Lopez check out the accessories at Bench.

BEA Azcuna (left) and Celynna Jimenez buy a knick-knack box from Grassroots.

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Kitchen klutz

Text and Photos
by Cheryl Tiu
2bU! Correspondent

FINALLY, something easy—Cher dipping the croissant into a pool of chocolate

The few hours I spent at BreadTalk made me realize that I should begin spending more time in the kitchen

ASK anyone and he or she would tell you I'd make the worst housewife. When I was living in Budapest, I once cooked hotdogs—with the plastic cover on. Back home in Manila, while my 11-year-old sister Christine reigned as the kitchen queen, concocting various pastries and desserts, I would often waltz into the kitchen, convinced that my solitary contribution would be to taste-test the finished product.

Bottom line: I do not know how to bake or cook.

One recent afternoon, Sam Refran and I set out for BreadTalk Rockwell for our latest 2bU! assignments. While Sam would be manning the frontline, I would be doing production—as a bread topper. I came in the prescribed black pants and put on the BreadTalk chef's uniform, a hairnet (something I hadn't worn since Home Economics class in fifth grade!) and a tall chef's hat.

Essential tool

We were given a tour of the kitchen by the production head, Joerge Barro, who explained that the most essential tool in making bread was the mixer. Since the ingredients were carefully calculated to produce a particular number of bread, the lack of any one ingredient meant automatically missing the target amount, resulting in spoilage. Strict quality control was, therefore, observed in BreadTalk.

I was first assigned to do BreadTalk's best-seller, Flosss. After slipping my hands into a set of plastic gloves, I was given a long serrated knife to slice the bread in the middle—not to completely tear it apart, but just to open it up enough to give room for the egg cream filling.

Head topper Dianne "Dylan" Mallo demonstrated how I should spoon in the cream in the middle, dunk it face-first into the pool of egg cream and then lather just enough for the pork, spicy pork and chicken flosses to stick to later on. We dunked the pieces of bread into the different flosses and then grabbed another handful of them to smother all over, ensuring that every part of the bread was covered.

It was actually pretty fun, though I'd have to admit I was working at turtle's pace, which Dylan assured me was normal for first-timers. Still, I felt the pressure when Sam would come in and announce we needed more bread, and I was still awkwardly composing the toppings.

For Double Trouble, I had to slice the bread in the middle again for the decorative French custard cream. With my incredible baking experience, my grip on the piping bag was marked with so much ineptitude. So what was supposed to look like pretty icing ended up more like a clumsy smear. Joerge told me only three of my Double Troubles made the cut. Boo.

The Chocolate Croissant, however, compensated for the losses. I only had to dip the croissant into the chocolate pool, lay it out on the tray and then sprinkle almonds on top.

I also found the Berries and Cream interesting. We used the pastry tip to drill two holes on opposite sides of bread, but the trick here was that those two holes could not meet. This was because one hole was for the strawberry filling and the other hole was for the whipped cream, and the two fillings shouldn't mix inside the bread.

First time

I was surprised then by my friends Ryan, Eva and Ramon, who couldn't resist seeing me in a baker's uniform and actually performing kitchen duties. Since I was working, the most I could do was to clench my teeth at them in a silent growl from behind the glass while they victoriously snapped blackmail pictures of me. It was their first time to see me hard at work in the kitchen.

Other pastries we did were the Hot Chic/ Chic Chic (the Daphne Oseña celebrity bread similar to the Flosss, but shaped like a handbag, adorned with "Swarovski crystals" in the form of floss), the Blueberry and Strawberry Rockies (bread folded outwards into half topped with blueberry and strawberry fillings), the Tuna Cheese Puffs (formulated tuna sealed inside the crust) and Mt. Fuji Swirl (squeezed Kaya filling inside).

By 8:30 p.m., I was already exhausted. My friends had opted to get a table at BreadTalk and devour the scrumptious delicacies while waiting for me. I noticed that they had bought that particular Berries & Cream I had made, and they had placed it right at the center of the table.

"We didn't touch this because we were waiting for you," they told me. Aww, how sweet, I thought—until they said, "So we could critique it in front of you and tell you how much it sucked!" And they laughed.

We divided it into four, and when they each stuffed a piece into their mouths, surprise crossed their faces. "Hey, this is really good!"

Instead of feeling smug, I was near disbelief. "Really?!"

"No, this is really good," they said. I felt a smile creep up to my face. While I really did owe it to the hardworking staff of BreadTalk, I felt a little proud since I had, of course, done the extremely difficult job of injecting the fillings into the bread, natch!

I used to live by the philosophy that the key to my heart was through my stomach. The few hours I spent at BreadTalk made me realize that a lot of effort goes into any type of food prepared, especially those handed to me on a silver platter. It's about time I spend more time in the kitchen.

E-mail the author at chloe_dominique@yahoo.com

THE AUTHORS Sam and Cher with the friendly, hardworking BreadTalk staff

CHER and Sam proudly display their Garlic Pizza creation.

PIPING the Kaya filling into the Mt. Fuji swirl

Talking breads and buns

Text by Saleema Devi Refran
2bU! Correspondent
Photos By Cheryl Tiu

TAKING a breather outside BreadTalk after a day's work

BAKING is one of my many passions. I love baking so much that I enjoy bringing my baked goodies to school. I'd share it with everyone and go home with an empty container and a big smile on my face.

To be a BreadTalk employee for a day offered the same satisfaction, but for a much bigger audience. With that, Cheryl (Cher) Tiu and I donned our white chef's shirts and hats. We trooped down to BreadTalk Rockwell and made sure we survived the BreadTalk challenge.

Frontliner

I was assigned to help man the front of the house while Cher took care of the back. Breadtalk cashier Maricris Inking was happy to teach me the ins and outs of front management, the BreadTalk way.

I helped make sure the trays were filled and the breads kept coming. I didn't notice it before, but cashiers who filled the trays actually had a spiel before they brought out their goodies. "Excuse me. Hot tray! (name of bread)" This was done to inform the customers of the fresh treats coming out of the kitchen.

Whatever Cher was topping (see related article), I would call out the name of her product. Some customers were already waiting for their Breadtalk treats when I called them out. Maricris said sometimes the customers themselves picked the breads out of their trays.

I was also taught that there was a science to the appearance and arrangement of the breads on the aisles. Storybreads or breads with stories occupied the top shelf, while the rest took their place at the bottom. Breads of the same shape and color were not placed together. You also had to follow the 3-2-3 formula when putting the breads on the tray: three at the back, two in the middle and three again up front.

I was also taught how to clean the trays and the thongs. Trays were cleaned using sterilized towels, done twice. The thongs were cleaned under running water and also using sterilized towels.

Maricris also taught me how to make BreadTalk's famous hot tea. Customers have a wide variety of teas to choose from. BreadTalk uses teapots with strainers for easy pouring. Customers can also ask to have their teapots refilled. Maricris chose the Rose for us since that tea had a sweet and fruity taste to it. Sadly, we got too busy to remember our sweet, fruity tea.

Top this

I got envious watching Cher prepare the breads from the topping station. Soon, the call of the kitchen got too loud to ignore. I requested that I get to experience topping as well.

Joerge Barro and Dylan Mallo kept Cher busy by filling and topping the breads. They were also glad to have me 'mess' with their products.

Piping the cream on the Double Trouble was a bit hard but very exciting. Moving my hand to make sweet circles of custard cream was such a treat. Though piping was on the hard side, finally doing it was such an accomplishment.

Well, watching the Lifestyle Network previous to this helped a lot. I was finally able to do what Nigella Lawson and Gale Gand have been doing. For a baker-wannabe, this was such a treat.

Making the Berries and Cream was also fun. I didn't know that you actually had to poke two holes and the ends of the breads before piping the cream and strawberries into them. It took a little practice, and it was only when I was piping in the Kaya filling (shredded coconut) into the Mt. Fuji Swirl that it became easy.

For our last Breadtalk product, Joerge and Dylan asked Cher and I to make filled puff pastries. I did the Chicken Curry and Cher did the Tuna Cheese Puffs. It was a bit tricky since the puff pastry dough was a bit soft, and managing it was a bit tough. Luckily, we were able to pull it off.

We only lasted two hours and our backs were already starting to hurt. Walking around the store and making sure things were in place was really tiring. I still remember how my feet hurt in my kinda pointy shoes. Thank God, I brought sandals with me. Comfy footwear can really do a lot of miracles.

The job:

The Good

You get to work with a fun and hardworking staff.

You get to experience how to make yummy treats.

The Bad

Standing and walking around all day can be straining to the back.

Not perfecting the pastries can be frustrating.

Walk in the carpark

By Brian Keith Santos
2bU! Correspondent

BEAT that, Paris. The author wipes in, wipes out.

EASTWOOD City in Libis is one of the most visited "happening" places in the metropolis. On a normal weekend, an estimated 3,000 cars park in all three major parking areas, namely, City Walk 2, Home Center and Cybermall car parks. This number could even reach up to 5,000 when an event is being held.

These parking areas are manned by 22 parking attendants. Last Sunday, my job was to be Parking Attendant No. 23 for the City Walk 2 parking area.

At first, I was really wondering what an attendant really did. The only thing that came to my mind was that they give out parking tickets and collect the payment at the end of the customer's visit.

When I finally got to Eastwood City, I was surprised to see an attendant standing just behind a podium, with only a huge umbrella shading him against the scorching heat of the sun. I imagined there would be at least a booth and a chair like the ones on then expressway.

I was on the verge of backing out about 20 minutes into the first meeting with the parking administrators. Then I thought of this as a challenge in my favorite show, "The Apprentice." I turned a possible embarrassment into one of the tasks that Donald Trump might give me if I were on the show. I realized that no job was low, and I had to do my best to impress my boss.

Well, my boss wasn't exactly like The Donald. I met with Kevin Tan, director for Commercial Operations, and Rhoda Niñofranco, marketing manager. I was so relieved when they told me I would be staying in a booth. They had Lawrence Cañero, parking administrator, accompany me on every task I was given.

Not easy

They first assigned me to the entrance booth of the City Walk area to give out parking cards and free magazines to customers. Patty, another parking attendant, helped me scan the cards and punch in the plate numbers in the system. It wasn't that easy. I had to type the info fast, even before the cars had approached the booth. My contact lenses were getting a bit sticky and I wasn't typing 40 words per minute either. I decided to defer to Patty, and just gave out the cards with a smile.

The second task was to stay at the exit booth. This time, I collected the fees from the drivers. I was also told to invite them to the city-wide sale of Eastwood last July 15-17. Although this was a bit easier than being at the entrance booth, it was probably the most stressful part of the day for me. I had to stay out in the sun, but staying inside the booth wasn't any help since it was a lot hotter inside.

During the briefing, Sir Kevin told me that part of my "adventure" would be to wash cars. I might have given him a worried look, because he assured me it would be okay if I didn't want to do it. Well, I don't even wash my dad's car, but I figured it would be a fun way to end my day, so I said yes.

PARKING pal

But I fretted when they said I had to wear a real car washer's uniform. It came in blue and yellow, which was not really a good combination. Honestly, I felt a little awkward walking around in it. Good thing they gave me a cap to cover part of my huge face.

One of the car washers told me that out of 100 cars in an hour, only two would most likely agree to have their car washed. I thought it was such a small number to beat. At the end of the day, my grand total was one car—an SUV—washed by the mobile carwashers.

Tiring day

It was certainly a long and tiring day for me, even though I worked for only four hours. I was surprised to see that real parking attendants didn't get bored with their jobs. They weren't even allowed to listen to music, eat snacks or read a book!

Nevertheless, I have to say that I enjoyed my one-day adventure. There were certainly moments when I wanted to quit and say, "That would be enough for the article." But would it have been good enough?

In truth, it was the opportunity to check out the interiors of my favorite cars that really kept me going. I also saw a couple of celebrities with their dates. But the best part was getting paid for a fun afternoon. I didn't get close to being The Apprentice, but at least I got to be The Attendant!

E-mail the author bk_santos@yahoo.com

The job:

The good

It can be an easy task especially if people who are shy and wants less interaction with customers.

The bad

It can be quite boring for people who are always on the go. Sitting in a booth may be very uncomfortable.

SUPER SHOPPERS. Winners of the Shopper of the Year Contest in Manila Nico Manahan and Cathy Avenido (center) with judges, Perception Inc's Noel Nieva, 2bU!'s Pam Pastor and Eastwood City's Criselle Icasiano

Showdown of the shopaholics

From page E1

Kong and their passion for shopping.

Difficult

The decision was a difficult one. But Cathy Avenido and her partner Nico Manahan emerged victorious, after blowing away the judges with their almost unbelievable shopping skills. They stretched their P2,000 to the maximum, returning with armloads of shopping bags *(See sidebar for their great finds.)*

Their victory came just a day before their anniversary—making the moment extra-special for them.

Today, the two are in Hong Kong, competing with representatives from 17 other countries including Australia, Germany, Italy, US, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, China and Thailand for the Hong Kong Shopper of the Year 2005 title.

Aside from bringing their purchases home (all finalists get to do that), there are great prizes in store for those who will win the competition—including round-trip tickets from Cathay Pacific, a two-night stay in a Grand Deluxe Harbour view suite, a helitour of Hong Kong and a Samsung Notebook. Special prizes will be given for different shopping categories.

Incurable

Cathy, who is a self-confessed "incurable shopaholic," seems to have spent her life getting ready for this competition. "I am the ultimate shopaholic! I never let anything get in the way of my favorite pasttime in the world," she wrote in her entry.

She recounted the time rain poured hard when she was at a night market in Korea. "I didn't even have an umbrella but I didn't let it disrupt my shopping. I continued going from one stall to the other, not noticing that I was dripping wet. I was even more concerned about my purchases, asking all the stall attendants to wrap them well so they won't get wet."

Even surgery couldn't stop Cathy from doing what she loves the most. "I recently had gum surgery but it was Mango's super sale already. So with a bandage covering my chin, I trooped to the sale, regardless of the curious stares I was getting."

The two are determined to do their best, even devoting time to research before leaving Manila. Nico said, "We're young, we're fast, we can run around Hong Kong."

Last year's winners were from Taiwan. This year, thanks to Cathy and Nico's zeal for shopping, the winners might just be from the Philippines. We're keeping our fingers crossed.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph

Theloot

From page E4

Red Team: The Smart Bargain Seeker

Karen Torres and John Mojica found great multi-purpose items that could fit under both the fashion and home categories. Even more impressive was Karen's skillful demonstrations of the many uses of their fashion finds.

BEAD curtains from Eastwood Bazaar (P250)

INDIAN silk from Eastwood Bazaar (P200 each)

BEADS from Eastwood Bazaar (P150)

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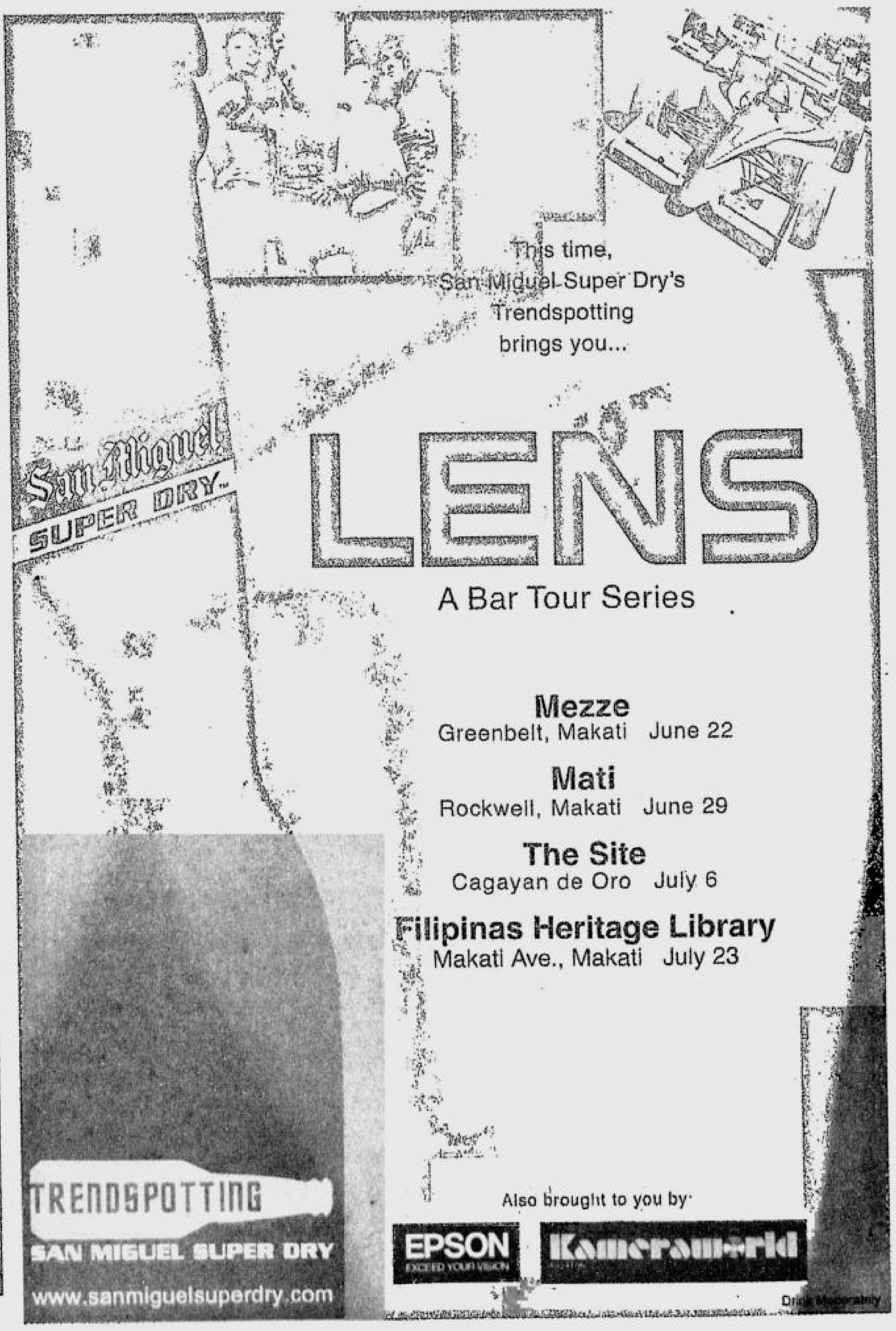

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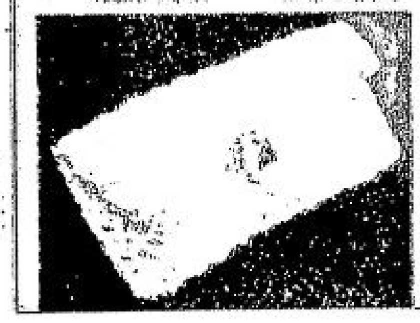
The loot

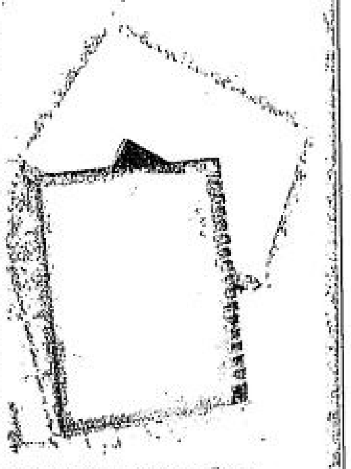
Here's a look inside the five teams' shopping bags

White Team: The Speedy Shoppers

Celyna Gimenez and Bea Azcuna are serious about their shopping. They zipped in and out of stores, heading straight for their items of choice. White team was the first team to finish, purchasing its three items after only 30 minutes into the game.

KNICK-knack box from Grassroots, P400

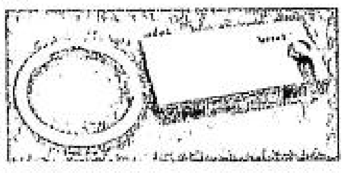




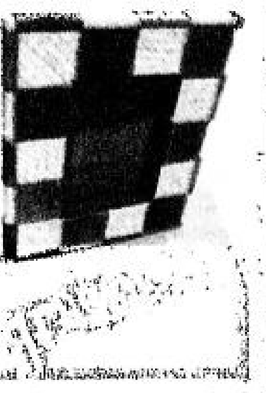
LEFT: Clutch from Bayo, P499; above: Leather notebook from Fino, P1,100

Blue Team: The Thinkers

JR Arteficio and Rico Lopez take shopping seriously, carefully thinking about and discussing their finds before actually purchasing them. At the end of the game, they still had half their budget left.



SIM card holder from Bench, P98



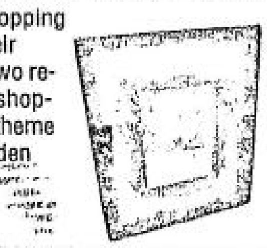
Sunblock, P299.75; (below) picture frame from Grassroots, P250

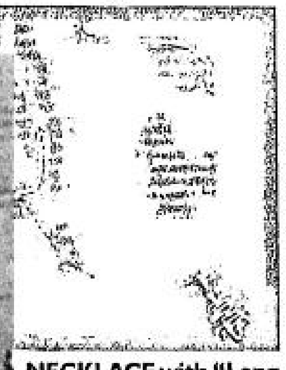
BACKPACK from Bench, P399.75

Green Team: The Great Planners

Siblings Aina and Tanya Cruz have been shopping together for ages. No surprise then that their shopping adventure went really well. The two really prepared for the contest, scouting the shopping locations and even coming up with a theme for their purchases—Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon.

JACKET from Details, P747.50

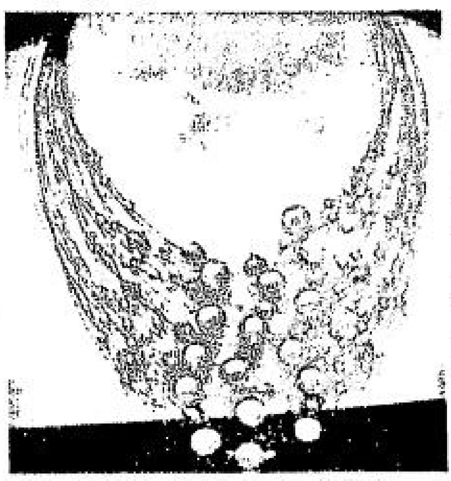




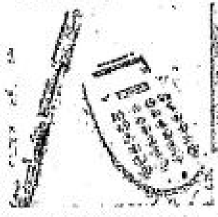
NECKLACE with "Long Life" pendant from The Bead Shop, P420; (top) picture frame from Grassroots, P400

Pink Team: The Winners

Filipino Shoppers of the Year Cathy Avenido and Nico Manahan, who are in Hong Kong today battling it out with other super shoppers from all over the world, wowed us with their shopping skills. Their style was thorough—exploring all the corners of Eastwood City for great finds and stretching their P2,000 budget unbelievably. They returned with bags and bags of unique purchases (and P2 left). Now that's power-shopping for you!

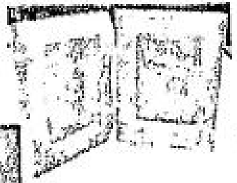


NECKLACE from Haute Stuff, Style Centrale, P150



SHOPPING tools. Calculator, P89, and pen, P6, from Nat'l Bookstore

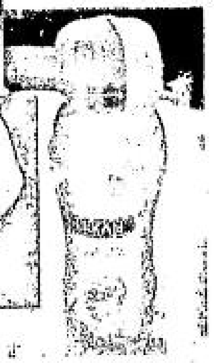
EARRINGS from Haute Stuff, P50



WOODEN picture frame, P71.25

HANGER, DIY Shop, P88

EVENING bag from Eastwood Bazaar, P120



WATER bottle from Watson's, P84.75

CATHY and Nico show off their finds. Flip flops from 152 Lily in Style Centrale, P200; guy's shirt (which doubles as a jacket) from Mantra, P500

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